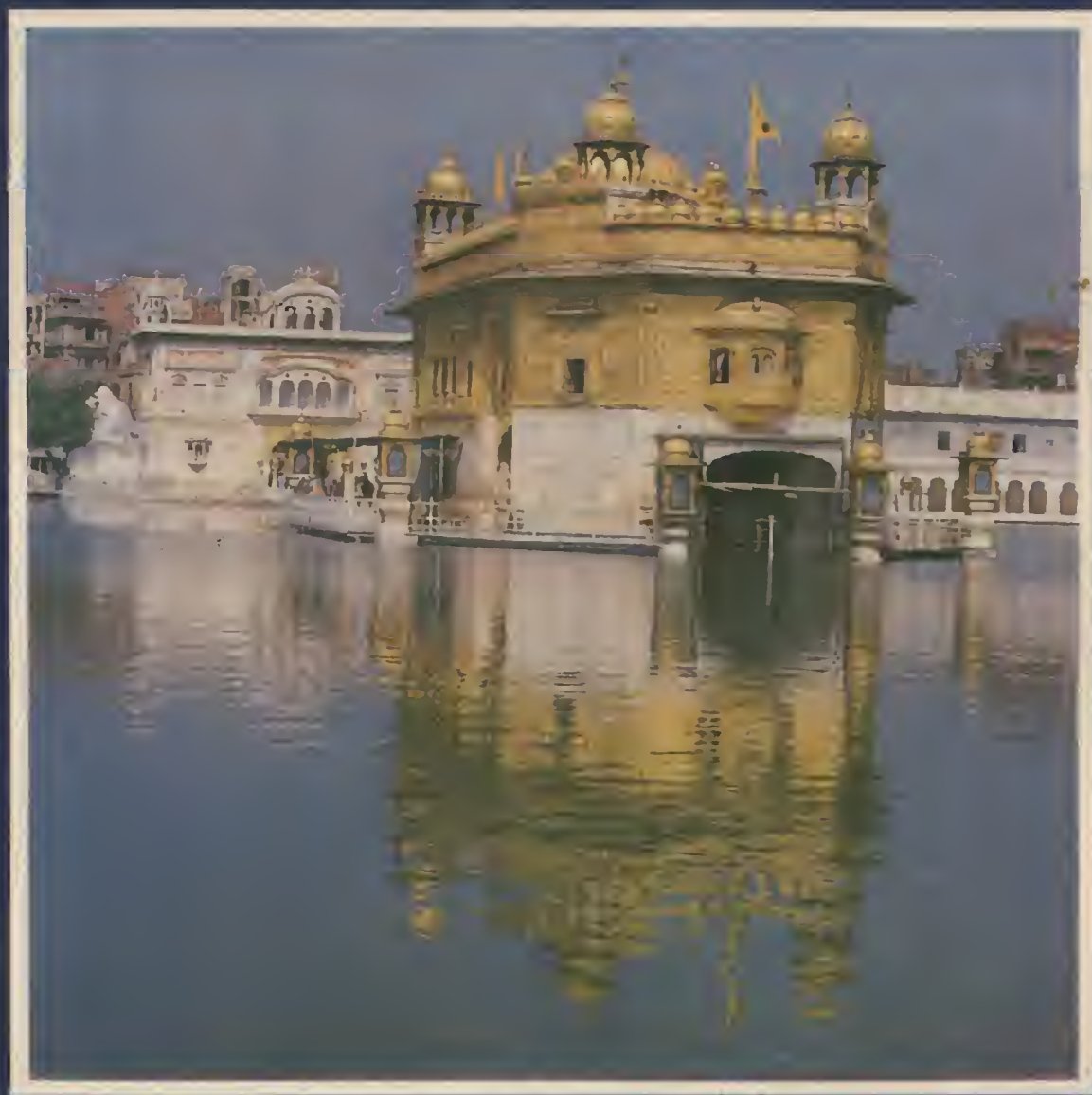


THE GOLDEN TEMPLE

History, Art and Architecture

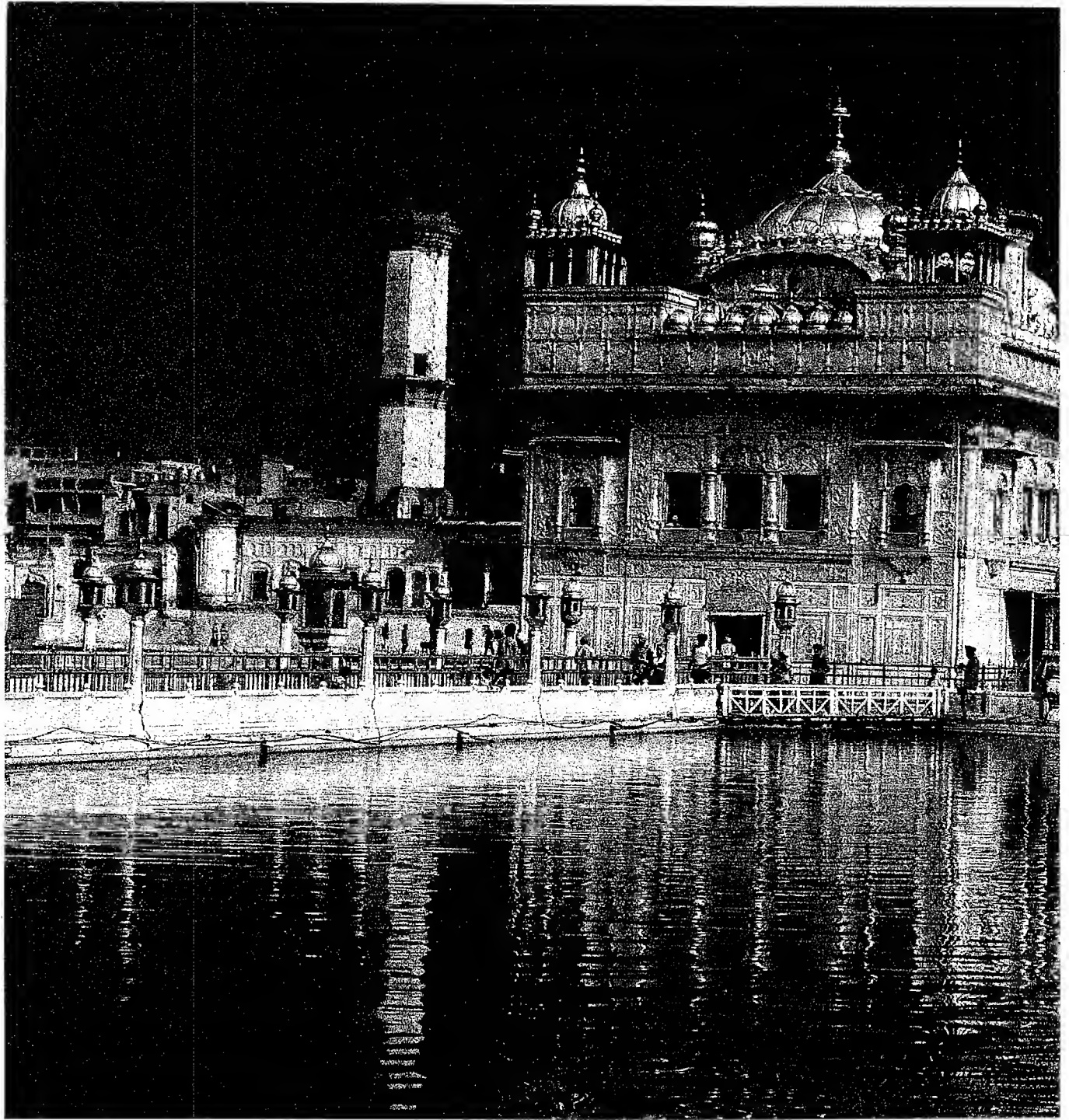


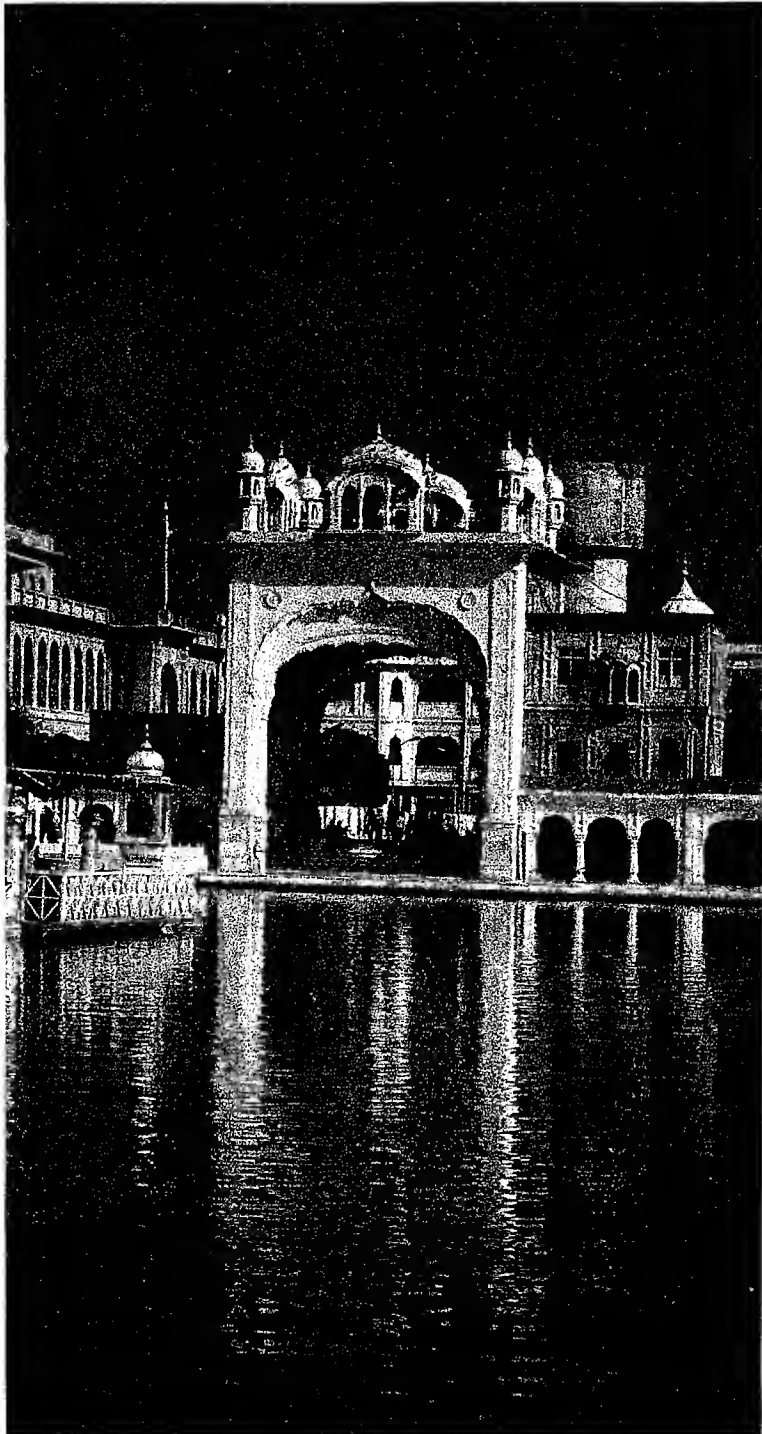
P S Arshi

73-192

Numerous spots have I visited : none like to thee
Thou whose splendour has arisen from
The Lord illimitable who founded thee.
Ramdaspur is populous, vast and unparalleled,
Sayeth Nanak, a bath in Ramdaspur is remover of all sins.

—*Guru Arjun*





THE GOLDEN TEMPLE

History, Art and Architecture

P S Arshi



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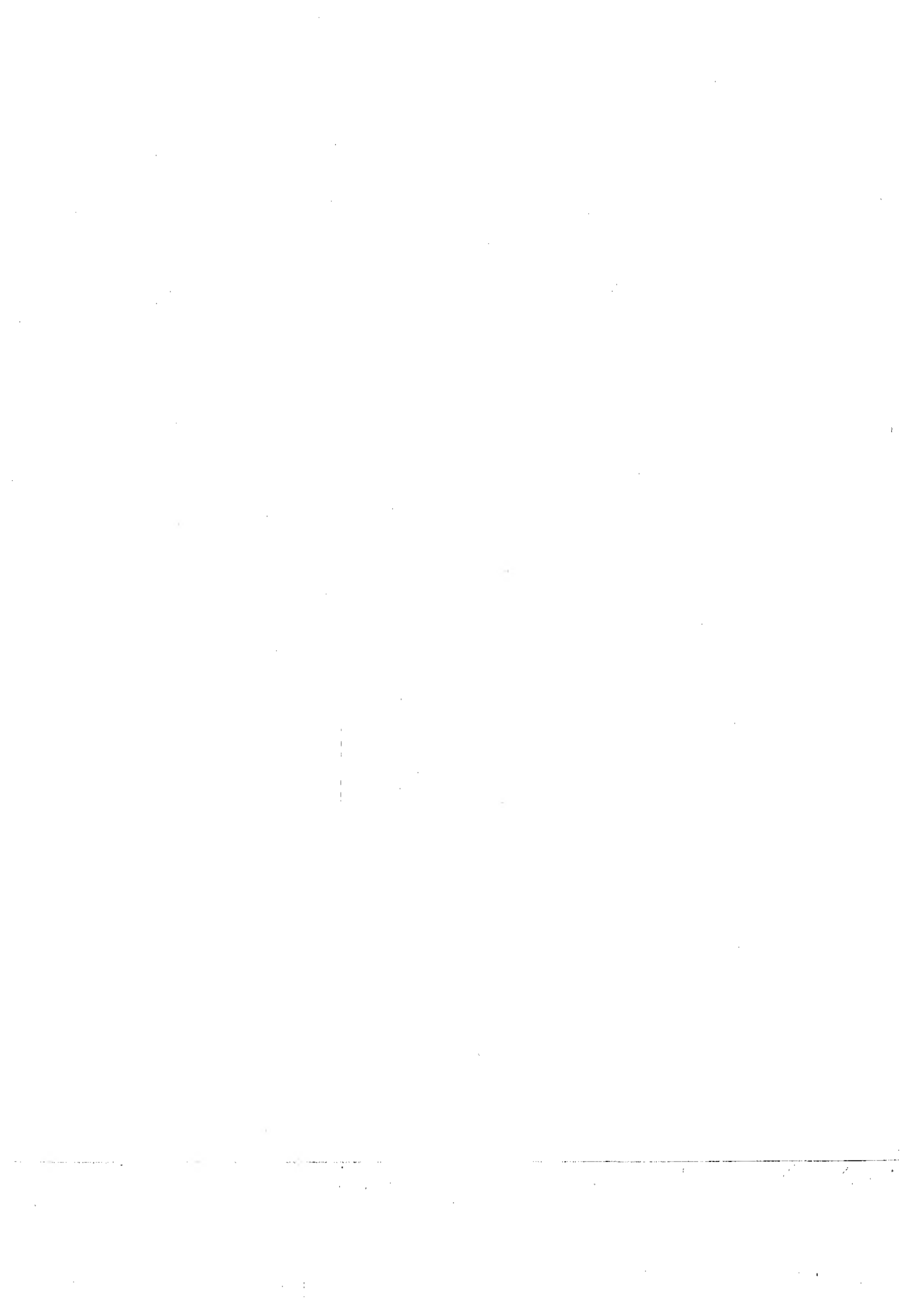
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Preface

The year 1988 is being celebrated as the 400th foundation day anniversary of the Harimandir, internationally known as the Golden Temple, by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, and the present monograph is being brought out to commemorate this occasion. An attempt has been made to trace the historical background of the foundation, history and management of this great Sikh shrine from the time of its inception. I have taken up and discussed some of the chronic controversies, for example, the sources of the design of the present building and the originality of the portals of the main archway of this temple. An exhaustive study of its architectural details, gorgeous ornamentation, the technique of fresco painting and other allied arts employed herein have been taken up in the present volume. The Golden Temple has contributed a lot to the evolution of the Sikh School of Architecture. This has been examined in detail in the last chapter "Architectural Analysis."

I do not however, claim to have said the last word on this subject. Although many European and indigenous scholars like Mr. J. Fergusson, Mr. Percy Brown, Mr. H.H. Cole, Professor Harbans Singh of Panjabi University, Patiala, Sardar Khushwant Singh, Dr. Mulk Raj Anand, Sardar Jagjit Singh and Dr. Madanjit Kaur have done commendable work on this celebrated temple there is enough still to be explored. An attempt has been made to

settle some of those questions left unanswered in earlier works due to paucity of archival records. The present study is an humble contribution and addition to the edifice already erected by earlier scholars.

To give a clear and cohesive picture of this celebrated shrine, this treatise has been amply illustrated with photographs and drawings. To resolve the problems of the varying dimensions of the temple proper, the archway and the Tank of Immortality, recorded by earlier chroniclers, some architectural drawings have also been appended to this monograph.

In the completion of this work, I received generous help from various persons, which I wish to acknowledge here. First and foremost, I am deeply indebted to my illustrious Guru Dr. D.C. Bhattacharyya, Department of Fine Arts, Panjab University, Chandigarh, who has been extremely kind to extend constant help and encouragement.

My sincere thanks are due to the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, the Archaeological Survey of India Library, Delhi, the Panjab University Library, Chandigarh, the Guru Ram Das Library, and the Sikh Reference Library, Amritsar, for their kind help and co-operation.

I am extremely grateful to my friend Prof. Chatar Singh Virk (Patiala), and Prof. Dharam Singh, Department of Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, for going through the manuscript and helping me with many a valuable suggestion.

I also acknowledge with thanks help received from Sardar Kulwant Singh, Assistant Secretary, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar; Dr. Surjit Singh, Model Town, Patiala, Dr. Gurmukh Singh, Language Department, Patiala; Sardar Gurcharan Singh, Librarian Patiala; Dr. R.P. Srivastava; Prof. Gopal Kirodiwal; Sardar Raghbir Singh, Draftsman; Sardar Mohan

Singh, Curator, Panjab Museums; and Sardar Amrik Singh, Art Executive, Department of Archives and Archaeology, Panjab.

I am indebted to Sardar Jaswant Singh 'Wafa' Artist, Delhi, and Dr. Saroj Panthey, for taking keen interest in this project.

I owe an obligation to M/s Intellectual Publishers, New Delhi, who published my earlier work *Sikh Architecture* from which some extracts have been used in the present work.

Sardar G.S. Sohan Singh, Artist, Amritsar, and his son Satpal Danish provided me with some valuable suggestions and photographs; my thanks are due to them.

I must express my heartfelt gratitude to Sardar Manjit Singh of Harman Publishing House, New Delhi for publishing this monograph.

Patiala
14 October 1988

P. S. ARSHI

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CHAPTER
ONE

Foundation and Historical Background

The most renowned Sikh shrine, the Golden Temple, popularly known as the Harimandir Sāhib or Darbār Sāhib is situated in the centre of Amritsar, one of the most flourishing trading centres of northern India, located 60 km from Lahore (Pakistan) and 85 km from Jalandhar (India) on the Grand Trunk Road. It is a living monument around which revolve the major currents of the history of the Sikh faith. Its foundation was quite in accordance with the early tradition of founding new places of Sikh pilgrimage by the Sikh Gurus.¹ The Golden Temple is not merely a pilgrimage centre but a source of continuous spiritual and mystical inspiration for the hundred of thousands of devotees who draw the very essence of their life from its holy presence.

Paucity of authentic historical evidence has resulted in several myths and legends associated with the past history of the site where the Harimandir stands today. Some of the chronicles trace its origin to the hoary past when it was a place of considerable religious significance. According to the information supplied by Amiya Banerji, the *Bhaviṣya Purāna* mentions one *Amar Kuṇḍ* (ever-

lasting pond) between the Rāvi and the Beās rivers, which was the bone of contention between the gods and the demons. The tank is identified with "Amrit-saras" or Amritsar,² literally, the pool of nectar.

It is also held that the Pāṇḍavas had taken water from that very pool to sprinkle on Bhima to bring him back to life. Lord Rāma is said to have spent a few years of his exile in the forests surrounding the pool. Tradition has it that even the Buddha was impressed by the natural beauty of the place and recommended it to the *Bhikṣus* for their hermitage.³ Sardar Gurnam Singh identifies this place with another site associated with the birth-place of the eighth century Buddhist saint, Padamasambhava, the founder of the Lāmāist Buddhism in Tibet.⁴

All such legends associated with the hallow of the place where the Harimandir is now situated, are purely mythical in nature, and there is hardly any historical evidence to support them. The situation does not improve even with regard to the period as late as the sixteenth century when the place acquired its first association with Sikhism, the religion that the celebrated Harimandir represents. One can notice even in Sikhism the presence of several mythical legends corroborating the sanctity of the place as late as in the sixteenth century also, and unfortunate as it is, no contemporary historical evidence can be produced to support any of these legends. According to one such legend, Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, visited this place many times. Once, while going to Sultanwind along with Mardana, the Guru passed by this area in A.D. 1502 and predicted that this place would, in times to come, acquire immense importance and sacredness.⁵ Afterwards, Guru Nanak sanctified the spot many a time with his visits in the company of Bhai Lehna who later on succeeded Guru Nanak to the pontifical office and came to be called Guru Angad.

In this connection it will be interesting to note a few of the popular legends that associate the place with some of the early Gurus of Sikhism.

One day Guru Nanak felt thirsty and asked Baba Buddha who was attending to his cattle nearby, to bring some water in a vessel from a pond close by. Baba Buddha said, "There is a tank but it is dry." Guru Nanak said, "Go and see, the tank is not dry". Baba Buddha obeyed and, to his astonishment, found the tank full of water, though it had been bone-dry in the morning. He fetched some water for Guru Nanak to drink and became his disciple. At this place Guru Arjan dug a new tank and called it *Amritsar* or the pool of immortality.⁶

Another legend has it that the third Guru Amar Das found "Amar Būṭī" (a shrub) from the banks of this pond for the skin ailment of Guru Angad the second pontificate.⁷

We find another popular myth about the medicinal properties of the waters of this tank : Rajni, the daughter of Rai Duni Chand, a revenue collector at Patti, in the district of Amritsar, brought her leper husband here and he was cured after a dip in the pond. It is said that Guru Ram Das (Bhai Jetha) who was on a visit to that area heard about the incident and came to confirm its veracity. He was so impressed by the surroundings that he decided to turn it into a pilgrim centre.⁸

Thus, we find that the legends mostly pertain to the magico-religious aspects of the place and of the pond situated there and in view of this, the place and also the pond acquired sanctity in the popular mind. As it happens with places which have an aura of divine intimation, this site too was ultimately transformed into a place of pilgrimage. Perhaps of no less importance is the fact that the place happened to be strategically located on a very important trade route, thronged by thousands of travellers, traders and other itinerants. The several magico-religious legends, as mentioned above,

about the place as well as about the pond situated there, strengthened with the passage of time.

The idea of establishing a pilgrimage centre here was conceived by Guru Amar Das, the third Guru of the Sikhs. It is also believed that he wanted to continue the tradition of founding new pilgrim centres for his followers.⁹ He probably anticipated tension between his sons, Mohan and Mohri, on the one hand and his son-in-law and disciple Guru Ram Das whom he appointed his successor, on the other. Accordingly, he instructed the latter to search for some place other than Goindwal for his future residence which obviously had to acquire the status of a centre of pilgrimage in view of the association of the Guru with that place.¹⁰ Tradition has it that Guru Ram Das settled down at this place which gradually turned into a place of importance in the faith and also a place of pilgrimage for his successors as well as for the followers.

There are various versions regarding the settlement of Guru Ram Das at this place. According to one version, the land was received as a gift by Guru Amar Das from Emperor Akbar as a token of thanks-giving for his victory over Chittor Fort in Rajasthan when the latter visited the Guru at Goindwal enroute to Lahore.¹¹ Bhai Santokh Singh, a renowned Sikh chronicler, writes that the Guru received the Emperor with all the honour due to his position and the Emperor with great pleasure relished the saltless *khicri* which the Guru himself used to take. On his departure, Akbar the Great offered a *jāgīr*. But the Guru thankfully declined the offer saying "The great God is kind to the Guru. His stores are always full and He does not leave the Guru in want." But the Emperor urged the acceptance of his offer for the *langar* (community kitchen) and left the *patā* (deed) under royal seal as an offering of love. It was this land which was subsequently used by the fourth Guru for digging the tank of Immortality and founding around it the city which was earlier known as Chak Guru Ram Das but later acquired its nomenclature from the name of the tank itself and came to be

called Amritsar. He had instituted a regular mission consisting of 52 men and 22 women preachers who carried the gospel to different parts of India.¹² The land was presumably handed over to Guru Ram Das when he was to be rehabilitated at a place other than that where the sons of Guru Amar Das had been living. Another version has it that Guru Ram Das himself purchased the land on payment of Rs. 700 to the *zamīndārs* of village Tung in the *parganā* of Jhabbāl.¹³ The offer of this land by Emperor Akbar to the Guru has not been established in the absence of a regular authentic deed. The Amritsar District Gazetteer contains some doubtful entries. According to some Sikh chronicles the land was granted to Guru Amar Das.¹⁴ but in this Gazetteer the recipient is Guru Ram Das. In the same Gazetteer it is mentioned that "In A.D. 1577 he (Guru Ram Das) obtained a grant of site together with 500 *bighās* of land from Emperor Akbar, on payment of Rs. 700 to the *zamīndārs* of village Tung who owned the land."¹⁵ But in the revised edition of this Gazetteer, the earlier version has been changed to "That the site was permanently occupied by the fourth Guru Ram Das, who in 1577 obtained the land in the neighbourhood."¹⁶ But in the same revised edition one finds that "Guru Ram Das, the fourth Guru of the Sikhs, obtained from Emperor Akbar the grant of a piece of land where now stands the city of Amritsar."¹⁷ From the above statements by various historians it is not possible to establish whether the land was granted by Emperor Akbar or offered by the villagers of village Tung to the Guru or the Guru purchased this site on payment of Rs. 700. A third version, however, claims that the land was presented by the people of Sultanwind to Guru Ram Das out of their reverence.¹⁸ All these versions are based on oral tradition and not on any authentic contemporary records.

An important point to note here is that in Brown's map, prepared in A.D. 1787, there occur simultaneously the two names Amritsar and Guru kā Chak for the area of the land concerned.¹⁹ The latter name presumably is a commemoration of Guru Ram Das who

received the land through his wife, Bibi Bhani, the daughter of Guru Amar Das as part of her dowry.²⁰ That explains why John Malcolm did not ascribe the foundation of the city of Amritsar to Guru Ram Das but traced its origin to a pre-existing village under the name of Chak.²¹

At the present stage of our knowledge, and since there is no other authentic historical evidence to establish any of the claims or counter-claims of the historians, it will be quite reasonable, in the light of the citation of Brown's map mentioned above, to conclude that the present site of the city of Amritsar was associated with at least either of the two Gurus, Amar Das or Ram Das, historically speaking, and hence there was the currency of the name of Guru kā Chak for the place concerned. The name Amritsar might have come at a later stage in view of the growing importance and sanctity of the 'pond' located at the place. A more detailed discussion on the subject can now be deferred to a later stage.

The Amritsar District Gazetteer²² supplies us with the following information and interpretations :

1. The land where the city of Amritsar grew up was granted in A.D. 1517 to the fourth Guru, Ram Das, by the Emperor Akbar.²³
2. In view of the above, the place was originally known as Ram Das Pur or Guru kā Chak, but was subsequently named as Amritsar to lay emphasis on the importance of the pond situated there.
3. The name Amritsar is a perpetuation of the association of the place with Guru Amar Das, since the word *amar* meaning immortal, has an echo in the word *amrit* also meaning immortal, suffixed to the name Amritsar.

All the above three points seem to be based on either traditional belief or on speculation by historians, especially

regarding the interpretations of the association of the place with Guru Amar Das in view of some similarity in the meaning of his name and that of the first two syllables the name Amritsar. A definite conclusion can be arrived at by future historians if they could reveal some historical documents in support of any of the above-mentioned theories of interpretations.

As it appears from various historical writings based presumably on some unspecified evidence, Guru Ram Das erected a small *kachchā* hut somewhere near the place where the Golden Temple is situated at present.²⁴ Subsequently, a pre-existing small tank nearby was enlarged with ceremonial excavations so that the tank, thus excavated, could serve as a sacred tank which was destined to be famous later as the "pool of nectar" (*Amritsar*) to lend its name to that of the place itself. Regarding the date on which the tank was excavated, there is difference of opinion among scholars, but it appears that it happened sometime in the latter half of the sixteenth century.²⁵ According to the Darbār Sāhib authorities, the foundation of the city was laid on 13 Hār, Samvat 1627 (A.D. 1570).²⁶

It however appears that Guru Ram Das could accomplish the work with an interim break of time when he had to return to Goindwal at the call of Guru Amar Das. The work was resumed by Guru Ram Das on his return after his ascending to the *Gurugaddī* in A.D. 1577 and was completed the same year.²⁷

Dr. J.S. Grewal states in his monograph, *The City of the Golden Temple*, "By 1577, the tank was dug to the satisfaction of Guru Ram Das. In his compositions we find him exhorting people to come for *darśan-snāna* as a meritorious act. Like the *baoli* at Goindwal, the *sarovar* of Guru Ram Das was meant to be a sacred place from its very inception. Devotees started coming from far and near. Many a devotee decided to settle down permanently in the

township that was fast coming up in the vicinity of the sacred *sarovar*.”²⁸

Guru Ram Das encouraged people of all professions to take up residence in the town. Immigrants from Patti, Qasur and Kalanaur are specifically mentioned in this connection by the early Sikh writers. So are the names of those devotees who assisted the Guru in his task : Bhai Salo, Chandar Bhan, Rup Ram, Guria, Gurdas and Udham. A market was established at the present site of Guru Bazār for a regular supply of essential commodities and exchange of goods. *Sarāfs* and *banjārās* were induced to participate in commerce just as craftsmen were encouraged to manufacture goods. By the time Guru Ram Das breathed his last in 1581, a township had come into existence, appropriately known as Ramdaspur. It was also known as Chak Ram Das, or simply Chak Guru, probably with reference to the *Chak-bastā* land given by Akbar.²⁹

The work was carried out under the supervision of Baba Buddha. The next Guru, Guru Arjan Dev, who ascended the *Gurugaddī* in A.D. 1581, enlarged the tank, paved it with masonry and also built the masonry side-walls.³⁰ He employed Bhai Behlo, a Sikh from Malwa, who was skilled in making the most durable bricks for the masonry work involved.³¹ The work was completed with the voluntary services from all shades of people and on its completion, Guru Arjan wrote the following words to immortalise his emotions on such a unique occasion :

God Himself hath come to fulfil the task of the saints
Yea, He Himself hath come to do the work.
And, now blessed is the earth, the Tank and the nectar
with which it is filled.
Perfect is the blessing of God, and all our wishes are
fulfilled.

And our victory responds through the Universe, and all
our woes are past.
Eternal is our perfect Lord, the *Puruṣa*,
whose praises the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas* sing.
And Nanak contemplates the Lord's Name,
Thus doth God manifest His Innate Nature.³²

By bathing in the tank of Ram Das
All the sins that man committeth shall be done away,
And he shall become pure by his ablutions.
The perfect Guru hath given us this boon.
When we meditate on the Guru's instructions,
God bestoweth all comfort and happiness,
And causeth the whole cargo to cross over safely.
In the association of the saints uncleanness departeth,
And the Supreme being abideth with us.
Nanak by meditating on the Name
Hath found God the primal Being.³³

The next stage in the development of the site is marked by the construction of the great temple there. Guru Arjan Dev conceived the idea of establishing a place of worship in the form of a temple for his followers. There are some stories regarding the architectural designing of the Golden Temple in Sikh chronicles. It is said that the design of the very first building of Darbār Sāhib was prepared by Guru Arjan Dev himself.³⁴ The idea of building the shrine in the midst of 'the Tank of Immortality' was to combine the spiritual and temporal aspects of thought. Regarding the laying of the foundation of the temple, there exist two traditions. According to one, the foundation of the Harimandir was laid by Guru Arjan Dev himself on the first of Māgh, Sambat 1645 (January, A.D. 1588).³⁵ According to the legend, the mason changed the placement of the brick laid by the Guru as foundation stone. On seeing this, the Guru prophesied that the Temple shall be rebuilt.³⁶ Giani Gian Singh states

that Guru Arjan Dev laid the foundation of Srī Harimandir Sāhib on Kārtik Sudī 5, 1645 B.K. (A.D. 1588).³⁷ M.A. Macauliffe is of the view that the foundation of the Golden Temple was laid by the Guru himself on the Ist of Māgh, 1645 B.K. (A.D. 1588).³⁸ Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha also gives the same date and version in his *Gursabda Ratnākar, Mahān Kosh*, an Encyclopaedia of Sikh literature.³⁹ The other version has it that Hazarat Mian Mir of Lahore, a friend and admirer of Guru Arjan Dev, laid in A.D. 1588 the foundation of this great Temple of Sikhism.⁴⁰ The earliest reference to this fact is recorded in *The Punjab Notes and Queries* as "The foundation stone of the Harimandir was laid by Mian Mir, between whom and Guru Ram Das there existed a strong friendship."⁴¹ The story of displacing the brick and rebuilding of the temple has also been attributed to him. This version has not been supported by any earlier historian and to prove this fact the contributor does not cite any authentic historical evidence. And this has come down to the present century chroniclers through hearsay or as a legend which has been accepted by the common Sikhs as well as historians.⁴² Even the Golden Temple authorities have endorsed this version in the *Report Srī Darbār Sāhib*, published in A.D. 1929.⁴³

The construction work of the shrine was undertaken with missionary zeal by the followers of the Guru. It went on relentlessly. Devotees in great numbers started coming to the upcoming Temple from far and near. For the completion of this great project finances were required. The Guru sent his Sikhs in different directions to collect donations for this noble cause. On the completion of the construction work on the Temple and the Tank of Immortality, the Guru composed the following hymns :

The Creator-Lord Himself, became my support
 And so no harm came to me.
 The Guru hath perfected my Ablutions
 And contemplating the Lord, my sins have been washed off.

O Saints, beauteous is the tank of Ram Das;
 Yea, Whosoever bathes in it, his whole progeny is blest.
 He is acclaimed by the whole world,
 And all the desires of his mind are fulfilled.
 Bathing, his mind is in peace,
 For, he contemplates God, his Lord.
 He who bathes in this tank of Saints
 Receiveth the Supreme Bliss.
 He dieth not, nor cometh, nor goeth;
 (For) he dwelleth only upon the Lord's name.
 He alone knoweth this wisdom of the Lord
 Whom the Lord blesseth with mercy.
 Nanak seeks the refuge of God, the Lord,
 And all his woes and cares are past".⁴⁴

Guru Arjan Dev was not only a great builder but also an organiser with extraordinary vision and involvement for the future course of the faith. He realised the need for the compilation of the hymns of his predecessors, his own compositions and also some writings of a few Hindu and Muslim saints who preached identical thoughts and social values. Bhai Gurdas, a relation and a disciple of Guru Arjan Dev, acted as an amanuensis with Guru Arjan for the compilation of the Holy Book. It is quite surprising that the compositions of Bhai Gurdas were not considered to be included in this work. While this work was going on, someone reported to Emperor Akbar that the Book contains some verses derogatory to Islam. To satisfy himself, Akbar visited the Guru and asked him to read out some verses from the *Granth* being compiled by him.⁴⁵ Akbar himself selected some of these verses. On hearing these verses he found all praise for the Almighty. He appreciated the work and also remitted the revenue of the farmers of the area on the request of the Guru.⁴⁶ This incident enhanced the popularity of the Guru among the followers and more and more people started coming to the Guru and the Harimandir Sāhib. The preparation of the Holy

Book was undertaken by the Guru with the obvious aim of enshrining it in the temple, the foundation of which had already been laid in the year A.D. 1588, as discussed above. The compilation of the Guru's message and sayings was completed on Bhadon Sudī 1, 1661 B.K. (1604 A.D.)⁴⁷ and the compiled volume acquired the celebrated name of the *Ādi Granth* which was destined to be regarded the scripture of the Sikhs. Since this holy *Granth* was enshrined in the temple, presumably soon after its compilation, the temple might have been constructed at a date not far removed from 1604 A.D. Thus, one can easily conclude, from what has been discussed above, that the temple was constructed by a date between 1588 A.D. and 1604 A.D.⁴⁸ with some marginal difference at the latter.

The above is the first phase of the architectural history of the Golden Temple or Harimandir. Soon after the temple was constructed it attracted the notice of the Mughals who were not favourably inclined towards the Sikhs. The Mughals, the ruling class, read some motive in the construction of this temple which obviously was drawing large numbers of people together, offering a potential danger to Mughal authority. They presumably got suspicious and thought it to be a religious pretext of the Sikhs to organise themselves into a military force against the Mughal Government.

Not only the Mughals, even the Muslim rulers of Afghanistan gradually started showing militant postures against the Sikhs quite frequently. The architectural history of the Golden Temple for about more than a century after its construction was marked by numerous destructive attacks on it by the Muslim invaders and the reconstruction of the temple by the Sikhs on each occasion. Ahmad Shah Abdali, it is known, demolished the temple as many as seven times,⁴⁹ the last being in the year A.D. 1764. But even after this the Sikhs did not subside, and rebuilt the temple during 1764-1776.⁵⁰

Since that date the temple was very carefully guarded by the Sikhs and was patronised with the required spiritual devotion. Later, Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1799-1839), with his religious zeal and verve, added a brilliant chapter to the architectural history of the Harimandir. It is known that he patronised the work of rebuilding the temple requiring considerable amount of additions, alterations and ornamentation, starting from the year 1802. In this activity, the architectural fabric of the Golden Temple presumably got a new orientation in terms of the design and the decor. Since then no major changes in the architecture of the Golden Temple seem to have been effected although routine renovations might have been done from time to time, necessitated by the exigencies of the ravages of time and weather.

The major dates known for the construction and reconstruction of the Golden Temple could, thus, be summarised as follows :

1. The first construction took place sometime between A.D. 1588 and 1604.
2. Subsequent reconstruction took place between A.D. 1764 and 1776.
3. Renovation, and perhaps a major change in the design and fabric by Maharaja Ranjit Singh starting from 1802 and continued through A.D. 1839.

The historical account of the Golden Temple will remain incomplete without the mention of the building of the Akāl Takht, in the precincts of the Harimandir, added by Guru Hargobind in 1608 A.D.⁵¹ The entire architectural complex was thus completed, comprising the Golden Temple (Darbār Sāhib), the Pool of Nectar (Amritsar) and the Akāl Takht (primordial seat of sovereignty).

History and Management of the Golden Temple

Having installed the *Ādi Granth* in the Harimandir in 1604, Guru Arjan looked to the development of the shrine complex and

the area around it. The Guru had a vision of a sprawling, flourishing town in this part of the country, which had to be a pilgrim centre. To begin with, the new faith required its own Harimandir and Mecca. With this goal in mind the Guru instructed his followers to undertake the construction of the main archway (Darshanī Deorhī) to the main shrine, on the western side of the existing tank.⁵² This addition added not only to the architectural pattern of the temple but also helped defend the Harimandir from the onslaughts of invaders. This architectural addition had its permanent impact on future Sikh shrines. It became an integral part of almost all the religious buildings of the faith. The Guru planned the markets, gardens and other residential places around the temple complex and soon the area developed into a growing city. He exhorted his followers to occupy the newly constructed houses and he himself settled permanently in one of these. This gave an impetus to others and many people came and settled there. In this venture the Guru was assisted by Bhai Bahlo.⁵³ A garden called Guru kā Bāgh was laid out and developed in the east of Harimandir. To infuse the religious faith of his followers in the shrine, the Guru laid down certain guidelines to be observed by devotees. He himself set example for the purpose by taking a bath in the holy tank, and performing circumambulation around the *sanctum sanctorum* and the tank every morning. Regular recitation from the holy scriptures and singing of hymns (*Kīrtan*) also commenced. A community kitchen was established and all the followers were asked to have their meals there together. This act strengthened the feelings of brotherhood and equality among them. Everybody, howsoever high or low, rich or poor, had to sit in a row on the floor along with others, and was served the same food. This was an important step in the direction of the organisation of the faith.

For all the activities sufficient funds were required. The Guru deputed some of his trusted followers to collect funds from devotees. Bhai Pheru, Bhai Bhagtu, Bhai Kalyana and Bhai Salo were also

assigned some other duties.⁵⁴ Baba Buddha, the most venerated among the Guru's followers and a contemporary of so many Gurus was assigned the duty of looking after the affairs of the Harimandir. Thus he became the first Sikh *Granthī* (priest) of the most sacred shrine. Those who were entrusted with the collection of funds were called *masands*. They used to visit devotees in their allotted areas and the funds so collected were to be deposited with the Guru. This money used to be spent on construction work and the community kitchen. The affairs of the kitchen (*langar*) were under the charge of Baba Pirthi Chand, the elder brother, but a rival of the Guru. So both had separate fields of operation for the newly-born institution while the Guru was supreme in the matters of religion and the accompanying rites, Pirthi Chand managed the mundane affairs of money and its spending.

The functioning of the temple went smoothly but the work of kitchen (*langar*) virtually came to a standstill. No food was served to the pilgrims. Devotees' money began to be embezzled and diverted to personal luxury and grandeur. News of this reached the Guru through Baba Buddha and Bhai Gurdas. On thorough investigations, the Guru found Baba Pirthi Chand selfish and dishonest. He was relieved of this duty. To improve the system, some more constructive steps were taken. The *masand* system was further strengthened. Money collected from the devotees was to be remitted to the Guru annually or on Baisākhī day. Thus there was considerable increase in the Guru's exchequer. This money was utilised for the welfare of the devotees and for further plans and projects and their execution. The Guru had something else in his mind in initiating these reforms.

With the passage of time and manifold increase in the number of devotees, the Harimandir became the most popular and foremost pilgrimage centre in northern India. The Guru became very popular among all the people. This attracted the attention of Emperor

Jahangir who lacked the religious liberalism of his predecessor and father, Emperor Akbar. It was not possible for him to tolerate the emergence of a new religion in his state. Jahangir became prejudiced against the Guru. The Chandu affair was used as a pretext to order the Guru's arrest and execution in A.D. 1606.⁵⁵ Thus a new dimension of martyrdom was added for the first time to the nascent faith of Sikhism. Guru Arjan became the founding father of a long line of martyrs who fell victim to the religious fanaticism of the rulers. The description '*Sahidan de Sartāj*' (The crown and glory of martyrs) suits him the most.

This incident sent a shock wave through the devotees and followers of the faith and proved a turning point in the history of the faith and the Harimandir. It was realised that the non-violent and pacifist ideals of the faith failed to cope with the growing intolerance of the Mughal empire. Something had to be done to avoid the infanticide of the new creed. The temple of peace and spirituality must grow a sworded arm to defend the faith and the faithful. During the early period the devotees were asked to follow the path of peace but with the ascending of *Gurugadi* by the sixth Guru Hargobind, some martial traits were introduced in their character. Guru Hargobind himself wore two swords of *mīrī* and *pīrī*, i.e., one symbolising the spiritual power (*pīrī*) and the other the temporal authority (*mīrī*). He adopted the royal dress with regal paraphernalia. He erected a high platform opposite the Darshanī Deorhī, the main archway of the Harimandir to the western side of the tank of immortality, to serve as a meeting place for his followers. On this platform the Guru used to sit in his royal position to listen to his devotees and to issue orders, i.e., *Hukamnāmās*. He himself started resolving the disputes of his followers. In the evening some martial games and bouts were held and heroic Songs (ballads) were sung in the presence of the Guru and his followers. Later on, this place came to be known as Sri Akal Takhat⁵⁶ and the Sikhs revered him as '*the sachā pādshāh*' (the true king). Under the prevailing situation

the Guru asked his followers to bring horses and swords as offerings in future. With this a new branch of trade-industry was also introduced among the Sikhs. The Guru himself practised swordsmanship and went out on hunting expeditions. Gradually an armed band of followers rose around the Guru. The seed had been sown of the future Khalsa army. During this period the devotees and followers were asked to visit the Harimandir in the morning and pay their obeisance. Recitations from the holy Granth continued in the temple. The Guru himself gave sermons and led the *Sangat* (congregation) in prayer.

In the evening the activities shifted to Sri Akal Takhat, where he received visitors, accepted their gifts of horses and arms, heard the day-to-day complaints of his Sikhs and decided their cases there and then. In fact he started a regular *durbār* (court) here in the manner of a king. This was a clear defiance of the ruling Mughal authority.

Guru Hargobind was not entirely preoccupied with militancy and warfare. Like his father and grandfather, he evinced keen interest in the development of Amritsar, which by now was quite a growing city. An outer wall around the city was got built to defend its inhabitants against enemy attacks. He also raised a small fortress called Loh Garh (castle of steel) in 1667 BK. (A.D. 1610).⁵⁷

Notwithstanding the Guru's growing political clout, the Mughal rulers at Delhi remained indifferent to his manoeuvres in the initial stages, but the local chiefs got alarmed. Considering the magnitude of this matter, they informed Emperor Jahangir and he too was perturbed. He ordered the arrest of the Guru who, according to a legend, was asked to pay a fine of rupees one lakh imposed on his father. The Guru refused the directive. So he was sent to jail in Gwalior fort for over one year.⁵⁸ In his absence the affairs of the shrine were looked after by Baba Buddha and Bhai Gurdas, priests of the temple and the Akal Takhat, respectively.

Guru Hargobind returned to Amritsar on Diwali day and a great rejoicing was held in the Temple complex. There was great fireworks and lighting in the Harimandir. The Sikhs still celebrate this day to commemorate the release of the Guru. Lakhs of people of all castes and creeds visit the temple on this occasion. This has become a regular feature in the history of the Golden Temple and the religion. It is one of the four special occasions when a 'jalāu' (display of costly jewellery, golden gates, etc.) is held in the Temple. On this day many decisions pertaining to the Khalsa Panth are taken and *Sarbat Khalsa* is also held here. With the arrival of the Guru in Amritsar the spiritual and martial activities were resumed with great vigour and enthusiasm. The working of the Akal Takhat was pushed forward. More attention was given to the religious functions and other rituals in the shrine proper.

After this the Guru was never disturbed by the Emperor. Rather he became friendly with him. The Emperor offered to complete the construction of Sri Akal Takhat, which the Guru declined, saying "Let me and my Sikhs raise this throne of God with the labour of our own hands and with the contributions from our own resources. I wish to make it a symbol of the Sikh's service and sacrifice and not a monument to a king's generosity".⁵⁹ As the Guru was left in peace, he devoted most of his time to organisational work. He added some new markets and bazars to the city of Amritsar. A garden was laid out adjoining the *Guru Kā Chowk* which is presently known as *Akālīan dā Bāgh* (The garden of Akalis). The Guru employed some ballad singers who charged the atmosphere of the Harimandir with the spirit of heroism. Actually the whole atmosphere of the complex turned into a training camp for the future Sikh Army.⁶⁰

This peace did not last long. The successor of Jahangir, Emperor Shahjahan, was not liberal to his non-Muslim subjects. Guru Hargobind too could not escape the fanaticism of the ruler.

He and his followers were compelled to fight a number of battles against the local chiefs in which, though the Guru was victorious, yet at the same time he realised the gravity of situation. He therefore, shifted to the small town of Kiratpur, founded by him in the foothills of Shivalik mountains (in the present-day district of Ropar), and he breathed his last there in A.D. 1644.⁶¹

After Guru Hargobind, the mantle of Guruship fell on his son, Har Rai, who became the seventh Sikh pontificate. His sojourn at Amritsar was quite brief. During the six months of his stay there he could not add any important structure to the existing complex. However the respect and reverence for the Harimandir (Golden Temple) and the Tank of Immortality grew among his followers, and increasingly large number of people came to have a holy dip there.

The eighth Guru Harkishan could not even come to the city of Harimandir as he died, while on a visit to Delhi, of small pox, in A.D. 1656 at the tender age of eight years.

The continuous absence of Sikh Gurus from Amritsar gave a fair chance to the *masands* and the priests (*mahants*) to become greedy and corrupt. They joined hands to misappropriate the Temple funds and started collecting offerings from the devotees. The entire working of the Harimandir turned into a disorganised affair. These persons were answerable only to the Guru, who was not there. Under the circumstances Sodhi Meharban, the son of Pirthi Chand and a cousin of Guru Hargobind, appeared on the scene and with the help of these unscrupulous and ambitious persons took over the charge of the temple⁶² and established his authority over the administration and day-to-day working of the Darbār Sāhib (Harimandir). He was succeeded by his son Harji in A.D. 1638 who continued for over half a century. He appointed his own persons to look after the daily practices at the shrine.

During this period, Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru, visited the temple, but according to a version, the gates of the archway of the Harimandir were closed by the ministrants of the shrine.⁶³ So the Guru simply took a bath in the tank and bowed to the sacred shrine from a distance and went away. But the second version relates that the Sodhi Harji welcomed the Guru.⁶⁴ The visit of Guru Tegh Bahadur is evident from the Gurudwara Dam Dama Sahib near Sri Akal Takhat, which was constructed over the platform to commemorate the visit. The Guru did not visit Harimandir again. He was executed in Delhi in A.D. 1675 under orders of Emperor Aurangzeb.

Sodhi Harji died in 1696⁶⁵ and his descendants proved unworthy to control the temple affairs. They were a divided house and completely lost hold over the administration of the shrine. Consequently, the *masands* became independent and began to assert their right over the supervision of the temple, the offerings and other income. They became monopolists and tarnished the image of the Golden Temple with all sorts of malpractices and mismanagement. Harimandir, the temple of God, became the personal property of a few unscrupulous priests and *masands* who committed all types of frauds on the gullible visitors.

This sorry state of affairs of the Harimandir irked the followers of the faith. They decided to approach the Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, who was camping at Anandpur Sahib. Some Sikhs in the form of a deputation waited upon the Guru and acquainted him with the deteriorating condition of the affairs of the Harimandir. The Guru deputed Bhai Mani Singh to immediately take over the charge of the Temple.⁶⁶ Bhai Gulzar Singh, Bhai Kuir Singh, Bhupat Singh, Dan Singh and Kirat Singh were asked to accompany him along with a copy of the holy Granth to be installed there.

On the arrival of Bhai Mani Singh, the pseudo-custodians of the shrine disappeared from the scene. Bhai Mani Singh established

his full control over the administration of the Temple and instituted daily *kathā* of the Holy Volume. As a result, the number of devotees and pilgrims increased manifold. More and more people started coming into the fold of this new religion from the adjoining areas.

Guru Gobind Singh could not get an opportunity to visit the holy Shrine because he remained busy fighting many battles against the hill chiefs, who were jealous of his popularity among the people and his growing power. He also fought a number of battles against the Mughal armies. Bhai Mani Singh along with his sons also participated in the battle of Chamkaur fought in A.D. 1700 against the Mughals and the hill chiefs. The Guru issued an edict (*Hukamnāmā*) in appreciation of services rendered by Bhai Mani Singh to the Khalsa Panth.⁶⁷ He served the Harimandir (Golden Temple) even after the demise of Guru Gobind Singh in A.D. 1708.

Guru Gobind Singh ended the line of personal Gurus and authorised the Granth as the Guru Eternal for the Sikhs. No living person however holy or revered, can thereafter have the title or status of the Guru. Guru Granth Sahib is now the continuous visible manifestation of the ten Gurus. In the Sikh tradition and faith, the word 'Guru' is used only for the ten prophet-preceptors, from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, and for the Granth only. However, Guru Gobind Singh appointed Banda Singh Bahadur to lead the Sikhs in their mundane affairs. The era after Guru Gobind Singh was full of turmoil and tribulations for the Sikhs. They fought many battles against the Mughals under the stewardship of Banda Singh Bahadur who achieved some resounding victories. He paid a visit to the temple in A.D. 1713 to pay his homage.

During the time of struggle against the Mughals, first by Guru Gobind Singh and then by Banda Bahadur, the celebrated shrine (Golden Temple) remained a continuous source of inspiration to the Sikh soldiers as well as the Sikh masses.

Farukh Saiyar succeeded Bahadur Shah on the throne of Delhi in A.D. 1714. He issued orders for the extermination of the Sikhs. Most of the Sikhs took shelter in Shivalik hills. Banda Bahadur was captured and tortured to death in Delhi (A.D. 1716) along with his companions.⁶⁸ He had no time to add to or embellish the Temple complex.

After the death of Banda Bahadur differences arose between his followers known as Bandaī Khalsa, and the original and staunch followers of the Guru, Tatav Khalsa. This affected the management of the temple adversely. Bhai Mani Singh who was in Delhi at that time was despatched by Mata Sundari, wife of Guru Gobind Singh, to settle the dispute. He stayed there for some days disguised as a sagacious Hindu whom no one suspected. With his able handling of the situation, the clash between the two groups was averted. He himself took over the charge of the management and regularised the daily practices there. With the idea of attracting the Sikhs to the Darbār Sāhib, Bhai Mani Singh planned to celebrate the Diwali fair (A.D. 1733) in the Temple complex. He applied for permission to hold this fair. The authorities granted permission on the condition that he would deposit Rs. 10,000 in the State exchequer.⁶⁹ The administration played a mischief by posting some pickets outside the city of Amritsar to frighten the pilgrims. Consequently, not many visitors turned up and the offerings were far less than expected. So Bhai Mani Singh could not pay the agreed amount to the Government. He was arrested and taken to Lahore. He was asked either to pay the amount or embrace Islam. The admirers of Bhai Mani Singh did raise the money but it was too late. Bhai Sahib on his refusal to embrace Islam had already been put to death on 24 June 1734. The Temple passed into the hands of the Mughals. The sacred shrine was plundered and the tank was filled with debris and carcasses of animals. Great persecution was let loose on the Sikhs. Most of them took refuge in the jungles, Shivalik hills and deserts of Rajputana and Bikaner. Prices were fixed on the heads of the Sikhs.⁷⁰

A local Muslim officer named Massa Ranghar converted the temple into a civil court and the main hall (*sanctum sanctorum*) where the Divine Music was heard uninterrupted was profaned by the Muslim officers holding nautch parties. This was beyond the tolerance of the followers of the Gurus. They considered it the highest insult to their religious place and a challenge to the dignity of their faith. Two Sikhs, named, Bhai Mehtab Singh of Mirankot and Bhai Sukha Singh of Mari Kambo, took a vow to avenge the sacrilege of the sacred shrine even at the risk of their lives. They started from Bikaner (Rajasthan) in the garb of peasants with bags full of coins as revenue. They entered the temple complex, tied their horses outside the main archway (Darshni Deorhi), infiltrated into the shrine proper and appeared before Massa. They severed his head and came out. The assistants of Massa Ranghar and other Muslim guards were too bewildered to offer any resistance. Both the desperadoes had gone out of their reach with decapitated head of the officer on one of their spears.

Now the temple was locked and more vigilant guards posted at all the entries to the shrine. It became very difficult for the Sikhs to visit their holy shrine. They could do so only at their personal risk. Thus Harimandir remained under the control of the Mughals.

In 1739 Nadir Shah of Persia invaded India. The Mughal army and the local chiefs got engaged in warfare. This provided some respite to the Sikhs to reappear on the scene from their hideouts. They even plundered the rear train of baggage of the Persian King on his homeward journey. Nadir Shah warned the Lahore Governor Zakaria Khan against the Sikhs who issued fresh orders for the extermination of the followers of Sikh Panth.

Diwan Lakhpat Rai of Lahore vowed to finish the Sikhs to avenge the death of his brother Jaspal Rai. He got the Harimandir desecrated and the tank was filled with earth in 1746.⁷¹ A fierce

battle was fought in which nearly seven thousand Sikhs were killed, and many were taken prisoner and executed later. This was a great setback to the Khalsa. They were not even in a position to visit their holy Darbār Sāhib for about two years. It was under the efficient leadership of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia that they could liberate the shrine by killing Salabat Khan. Thus the control of the Temple was taken over by the Khalsa again. They cleaned the tank and the Temple. The Diwali festival of 1748 was celebrated with great enthusiasm. A *Sarbat Khalsa* was held. The Harimandir became the central seat of Sikh politics and prime target of the Mughals. Mir Mannu, the Governor of Lahore, no doubt hostile to the Sikhs, sanctioned a *jāgīr* of one lakh rupees to the Sikhs, through the good offices of Diwan Kaura Mal, one-fourth of which was assigned to the Darbār Sāhib (Golden Temple) for its maintenance and development. Diwan Sahib also donated Rs. 11,000 to the shrine as a token of respect. The Sikhs nicknamed him as Mitha Mal (the sweet one) instead of Kaura Mal (the bitter one).

The Sikhs remained at peace for some time till the invasion of Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1751. On his return he appointed Mir Mannu as his deputy in the Punjab. He now let loose an unprecedented oppression on the Sikhs. The Sikhs again had to leave the plains and take shelter in the Shivalik jungles. The Temple of God got neglected. This was the most difficult and trying period for the Sikhs. The *jāgīr* was confiscated. It was only after the death of Mir Mannu that they could again visit the Harimandir.

Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India again in 1757. He reached Amritsar, plundered the city, and demolished the temple and other Sikh shrines. The Tank of Immortality was filled with garbage and dead bodies.⁷² As soon as the Abdali king turned his back, the Sikhs became active. The building of the Temple was restored and the holy tank was cleaned. It is said that Maratha leaders too came to visit the shrine. Harimandir became a focal point of life and death

for the Sikhs and on the other hand the Mughal chiefs were determined to wipe out the Sikhs and their celebrated shrine. This was the worst time for the followers of the Khalsa Panth.

Ahmad Shah Abdali while hurriedly going back to Kabul in the wake of a rebellion in Turkistan left his son Tymur under the guardianship of Jhan Khan, in charge of the Punjab. He attacked the restored fortress Ram Rowni (Amritsar) of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, and razed it to the ground. Other sacred buildings of the Sikhs were demolished and the tank of immortality was filled up. The Sikhs had to take refuge in the hills and the jungles for some time. In 1758 the Sikhs came out of their hideouts and fought decisive battle against the pathans and routed them. They reinstalled their sacred shrines in Amritsar and cleaned the "Tank of Nectar". They occupied Lahore, and issued their own coin. This was the first time the Sikhs became a sovereign power in Punjab, though for a short period.

In 1762 Ahmad Shah Abdali again attacked Amritsar and blew up the restored Sikh shrine with gunpowder, the holy tank was filled with slaughtered cows, debris, earth and garbage.⁷³ The Temple and the tank were levelled. It is said that while the building of the Temple was burning, a flying brickbat struck Abdali on his nose, an injury which later caused his death in the form of cancer in 1773.

After the departure of the Afghan invader, more than sixty thousand Sikhs assembled on the ruins of their beloved shrine and source of life. Sardar Charat Singh, the grandfather of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, acquired possession of Amritsar in 1763 and he was then made in-charge of restoring and rebuilding of Harimandir and its holy tank. The Sikhs could hardly find any time to complete this task. In January 1764, the Khalsa attacked Sirhind and plundered

the city. As it was a rich city and remained an important headquarters of the Mughals, they collected handsome booty from this loot. To share the expenditure of rebuilding the Darbār Sāhib a sheet of cloth was spread on the ground for the funds in the form of donations from the *Sardārs*. About seven lakh rupees were collected there and then. The whole amount was deposited with some trustworthy bankers of Amritsar. Bhai Des Raj of village Sur Singh (Amritsar) who was respected for his honesty, was given the charge of these funds. He was also given a seal to collect more funds for the purpose of completing the work of reconstructing of the Harimandir and the tank according to plan.⁷⁴

The next invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali came in December 1764 when he attacked India with the sole object of destroying the Sikhs. But to his surprise he found the city totally abandoned and there were only thirty Sikhs in the vicinity of the Temple who gave him full resistance but lost at last. The Shah pulled down the rebuilt structure of the shrine and levelled the tank again. He again came to India in 1765 and 1767 but returned to his country without any success.⁷⁵

During this period of great oppression and turmoil, the Temple remained under the supervision and control of Udāsī Saints.⁷⁶ From 1748 to 1764, Shri Gopal Dass Udasi of Village Jasowal in district Ludhiana was appointed Granthi (Priest) by the Khalsa. But he could not manage the temple satisfactorily. He neglected his duties, and depended only on some menial staff to look after the temple. He even misappropriated temple funds. As the *Udāsīs* were not baptised Sikhs, they did not follow the established Sikh traditions and worship rituals in the holy shrine. They even removed the Granth Sāhib and placed *Pañj Granthī* in the *sanctum sanctorum*. Consequently, there was resentment among the followers of the faith as a result of which the charge of the temple was taken over by the Khalsa.

The foundation of the new building of the Darbār Sāhib was laid by Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia in 1764.⁷⁷

After the final departure of the Durrani King the Sikhs became the masters of their land. The *Misls* (confederacies) were founded. The primary object before the Khalsa was to restore the glory of the sacred shrine and the Tank of Immortality. As more and more territory fell under their sway they were able to spend large sums on the additions to and maintenance of the Temple. The services were reorganised. The Harimandir became the rallying centre for the Sikh religion and politics. All the leaders or Sardārs visited the shrine frequently and held meetings there. It was the duty of every Sardār to ensure the proper management of the shrine. They were to guide and instruct the persons working there. Many of the Sardārs constructed their residential dwellings known as *bunḡās* in the periphery of the Tank. These *bunḡās* served as educational institutions also. All these were named after their respective confederacies and Sardār. These places were used as rest houses for accommodating pilgrims during festive occasions by various *Misls*. These facilities began to draw very large numbers of devotees who along with their Sardārs contributed liberally to the temple treasury for running the *laṅgar* and undertaking the construction work of the temple. According to Giani Gian Singh, the construction work of Harimandir, the Tank, the causeway and the Darshani Deorhi (archway) was completed in 1776.⁷⁸

In the ensuing years the Sardārs of each *Misl* tried their might to expand their respective territories by subduing the local chiefs and petty lords. Ranjit Singh proved his supremacy over others and established his kingdom in 1799 with his capital at Lahore. Thus Amritsar lost its political importance as the headquarters of the Sikhs shifted to Lahore. The administration of the Darbār Sāhib went under the control of the state. The Maharaja took keen interest in the development of the shrine and the city. He had been visiting

the Temple earlier, and even after the occupation of Amritsar in 1805.⁷⁹ He continued to visit the sacred shrine to pay his obeisance and made cash offerings there and at the Akal Takhat. He did not control the administration of the Temple himself but appointed a committee of respectable citizens of the city of Amritsar. He was the elected head. He gifted the income from the octroi of the city to the Darbār Sāhib and also granted other *jāgīrs*. The construction of various *bugās* and other dwellings was completed around the Temple during this period. Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia was appointed in-charge of the shrine and Sardar Surat Singh Giani of Chiniot (District Jhang, now in Pakistan) was made the manager of the Temple. It is said that his son Giani Sant Singh also continued to hold this position and was the in-charge of gold work done in the shrine. It is also said that the present structure of the Harimandir was redesigned and rebuilt during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh with royal patronage.⁸⁰ Bhai Sant Singh Giani was asked to supervise the management of the shrine on behalf of the Maharaja. He was succeeded by his son Bhai Gurmukh Singh in 1831 and continued in this position till 1841.

During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh some prominent Europeans also happened to visit the Harimandir. Among them the names of Burns, Jacquemont, Lord Auckland and his sister Emily Eden and the Commander-in-chief of European armies, Sir Henry Fane, are worth mentioning. Though the Akalis were not in favour of these Europeans paying visit to the temple, the Maharaja made elaborate arrangements for their safe conduct to the Temple. He issued very strict orders in this regard. Special arrangements were made to celebrate these occasions and the necessary instructions were issued to the priests and custodians of the shrine for illumination and fireworks there. It was not the intention of the Maharaja to display his personal glory but to expose the beauty and grandeur of the Harimandir and the surrounding apartments. Many foreign artists visited the court of the Maharaja and some of them prepared

sketches and paintings of this shrine *par excellence*. Some of these are preserved in the British Museums in London.

Though every Sikh chief contributed for the development and beautification of the Harimandir, no one could surpass Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The work of construction, beautification and embellishment went on uninterrupted. The upper part of the outer walls, the kiosks and the central main dome were gold-plated, thus giving the name of 'Swarn Mandir' (*swarn*=golden ; *mandir*=temple).

After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, his successors Maharaja Kharak Singh and Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh did pay attention to the already started work of building the temple complex and to the decorative schemes. The encasing of the Temple portion and covering of certain parts with gold leaf was carried forward.

Maharaja Sher Singh was very keen on the completion of the remaining work. He granted large sums and *jāgīrs* to the Golden Temple. However, his tenure was very short as he died in 1841. During this period Bhai Gurmukh Singh, son of Giani Surat Singh, passed away and Bhai Parduman Singh succeeded him. He was well-versed in *gurbānī* and *kathā* recitation. He managed the temple affairs very efficiently.

With the death of Maharaja Sher Singh a period of anarchy commenced. Virtually there ensued a civil war among various factions of Sikhs and the courtiers. The royal patronage to the Golden Temple came to an end. Punjab was annexed in 1849 by the British and the glorious epoch of the Golden Temple was brought to an end. The greedy and selfish class of priests, engaged in the service of the Temple, took advantage of the disturbed situation. They became corrupt and embezzled the Temple funds and offerings.

British administration had nothing to do with the affairs of the shrine. But soon the British realised that the Golden Temple was

much more to the Sikhs than a mere place of worship. Sikhs and Sikhism had their roots in the immortal waters of this sacred tank of Guru Ram Das that have never allowed the tree of this martial faith to wither. To have sway over the Sikhs, it was imperative to acquire some sort of control over the Temple. To begin with, they did not disturb the existing arrangements. Sardar Lehna Singh was permitted to continue as Manager of the Golden Temple. But overall supervision of the Temple was in the hands of the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar.

In 1862 the British authorities started the construction of a Clock Tower in Gothic architectural style in the north-eastern wing of the outer *parikarmā* by demolishing some *bunḡās* (dwellings). This included the *Bunḡā* of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh and the *Aṭṭārī* of Rani Sada Kaur. These buildings were very dear to the Sikhs. Their sentiments were hurt but they were helpless before the authorities. The building of the clock tower was completed. Later, this structure was pulled down by the Sikhs when they resumed control of the Temple complex.⁸¹

To look after the Temple affairs, the Deputy Commissioner appointed a committee of ten prominent Sikhs. This Committee could not function for a long period due to certain reasons. The authorities did not take any interest in filling up the vacancies resulting from the death or departure of certain members. Another committee consisting of nine Sikhs was constituted by the Deputy Commissioner and a '*Sarbrāh*' was appointed to assist the committee. But this committee too met with the same fate. The *Sarbrāh* took full control of the Golden Temple. Being a Government nominee, he hardly cared for the sentiments of the Sikhs. He was answerable only to the Deputy Commissioner from whom he used to receive instructions. The priestly class asserted their proprietary right over the income of the Temple. All sorts of mismanagement, embezzel-

ment and irregularities were committed by them. So the Sikhs approached the Deputy Commissioner who called a meeting of some prominent Sikhs. After long discussions a code of control, i.e., rules and regulations for the administration of the Golden Temple affairs, was framed. But with the passing of some time the *Sarbrāh* started ignoring these rules. The management of the Golden Temple became far from satisfactory. Even the established Sikh religious rituals were ignored. The surrounding building in the *parikarmā* had been occupied by the public and some undesirable elements. Some of them had even set up their commercial establishments, in the precincts and some Hindu priests had started idol worship along side. The prevailing situation gave a rude shock to the Sikhs and they were compelled to think and consider some ways to improve the management of the Temple. A meeting of prominent Sikhs was convened and the matter was discussed. The *Khalsa Diwan* Lahore proposed in a meeting, held in 1907, that the *Sarbrāh* should be removed and a committee consisting of Sikh Chiefs be appointed in his place.

On 12 October 1920, another incident took place and marked a milestone in the history of the shrine. The priests fixed the time for entry to the Golden Temple from 9. a.m. for Sikhs belonging to the Backward and Scheduled Castes. One day *karāh parsād* brought by some Scheduled Caste persons was not accepted. It was against the basic tenets and teachings of the Sikh Gurus who preached equality. The action of the priests was protested against. The followers of the faith assembled in a congregation and pressed upon the priests for the acceptance of *karāh parsād*. After some altercations the priests gave in and accepted the *karāh parsād* offered to the Almighty in the Golden Temple. From here the congregation went to Sri Akal Takhat to discuss the other matters relating to the Sikh Panth and the central shrine, but to their surprise they found that the priests had already deserted the Takhat. The Sangat appointed a committee

of Sikh representatives for its management. The Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, appointed his own committee the next day with the manager (*Sarbrāh*) as its president.

With this incident a struggle between the Government and the Sikhs began for the control of the Sikh shrines. The Sikhs started a non-violent movement for reform in Sikh shrines. They wanted to get the Sikh Gurudwaras (Sikh temples) liberated from the clutches of the corrupt *mahants* (abbots). The Sikhs wanted to retrieve the control of the Golden Temple from the British authorities so that the Temple complex could be cleared of all kinds of undesirable elements. To achieve this goal a meeting of prominent Sikhs was convened by the Jathedar of Sri Akal Takhat on 15 November 1920. It was resolved that a committee representing members from all walks of life be appointed to manage the Temple. On the other hand, the Lt.-Governor of Punjab set up a local committee consisting of 36 members two days before the Sikh Conference. To avoid a confrontation between the Government and the Sikhs, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala mediated and it was resolved that the committee of 175 members be formed and it would also include all the 36 members (Sikhs) appointed by the Government. This committee was known as Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia was appointed its President until proper elections were held.

The first meeting of the SGPC was held on 12 December 1920 and Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia was elected its President. He later resigned to join the Punjab Government and Baba Kharak Singh replaced him on 14 August 1921. The SGPC took over the management of the Golden Temple. It further nominated another sub-committee of nine members with Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia as its President to look after the Sikh shrines including the Golden Temple. This committee framed some rules for the management of the Temple affairs. Under the instructions from the

committee, the idols and relics which were against the basic Sikh tenets were cleared from the surroundings of the Golden Temple in spite of resistance from some Hindus. All the offerings and other income were to be deposited with the SGPC. This committee worked hard for about one and a half year to regulate services at the Golden Temple and brought tremendous improvement in its management. Control of the gurudwaras began to pass one by one from the *mahants* to the SGPC, but there was strong resistance and opposition where the priests and *mahants* were strongly entrenched or enjoyed the patronage and backing of the Government. There were many obstacles in the working of the SGPC. The priests were not ready to part with the property and offerings of the shrines, having come to consider these as their personal possessions. The Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, refused to acknowledge this committee on legal and technical grounds.

On November 21, 1921, the District Magistrate of Amritsar raided the house of Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia, the President of the Golden Temple, and forcibly took away the keys of the Temple treasury.⁸² An agitation for the return of these keys ensued. Many prominent Sikhs, including some members of the SGPC, were arrested and put in jail. The agitation spread like wildfire under the growing pressure of the movement and, frightened at the surcharged atmosphere in the country, the authorities had to come to a settlement with the Sikhs. The keys were returned to Baba Kharak Singh, the President of SGPC, on 19 January 1922.⁸³

This was the first victory of the Sikhs and was also termed as the first victory in the battle for Independence of the country by national leaders including Mahatama Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who were fighting for the freedom of the country. After this the Sikhs stepped up the struggle for reforms in the gurudwaras. This movement is known as Gurudwara Reform Movement in Sikh history.

In the year 1923, on June 27, the Sikhs undertook the *kār sewā* (service through voluntary labour) at the Golden Temple. Maharaja Sher Singh had earlier started such *kār sewā* but could get hardly one corner of the tank desilted, before he breathed his last.⁸⁴ In the *kār sewā* of 1923 persons from all walks of life irrespective of their caste and creed participated. Some Hindus and Muslims also took part in it. Maharaja Bhupindar Singh of Patiala, who commanded great respect among the Sikhs, also participated in the service which continued for 22 days. The whole "Tank of Immortality" was desilted and refilled with water.

The movement against the *mahants* and the *pujārīs* continued for years together with vigour and enthusiasm against the *mahants* and the *pujārīs*. *Jathās* (bands) of devoted Sikhs started moving towards the *Guru kā Bāgh*, Jaitu, and Nankana Sahib (now in Pakistan) to liberate their shrines there from the greedy and corrupt priests. They had to make numerous sacrifices in these *morchās* (agitations). The SGPC was declared an illegal body by the Government on 13 October 1923. Hundreds of Sikhs were arrested, many were killed and a number of them paid lakhs of rupees as fine. But the indomitable Sikh spirit did not relent. The movement became very powerful and the authorities came to an agreement. Thus the movement ended in success. The British had to legislate the Gurdwara Act which was duly signed by the Governor General on 28 July 1925.⁸⁵ Under the Act the management of the Golden Temple was handed over to the SGPC permanently replacing from the clutches of the hereditary *pujārīs*, *mahants* and *sarbrāhs*. Later on some other historical gurudwaras also came under this body. Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee was formed with duly elected members and proved a boon for the rapid development of the Golden Temple. This local committee worked in a planned manner. Everything had to be executed according to stipulated rules and regulations. A proper office of this committee was established and some appointments were made on a regular basis, according to the nature

of work. The accounts were kept and audited properly. The salaries of the staff were fixed, their duties and cadre determined. With this a tremendous improvement in the management of the Darbār Sāhib was brought about. The devotees visiting the Temple increased manifold. New programmes and schemes were planned for further development of the Temple complex.

A scheme for widening of the outer *parikarmā* (circumambulatory path) was drawn and a sum of Rs. 20,000 was provided in the SGPC budget of 1928-29 for this purpose. In the northern and southern corners of the eastern side of the Tank two structures were raised which are called *poṇās* (bathing compartments for the ladies). Drinking water facilities (*chhabīls*) were provided for in all the four corners of the outer *parikarmā*. A group of devoted Sikhs was appointed to look after the welfare of the pilgrims in the outer *parikarmā*.

To provide more facilities to the pilgrims, a new rest-house was planned; the foundation of Guru Ram Das Sarai was laid by Sant Sadhu Singh of Patiala on 17 January 1931. In this building there are 132 rooms and 8 halls spread across two storeys. On the ground floor is housed a library called Guru Ram Das Library, for the benefit of devotees and scholars.

The buildings of Akal Rest House, Nanak Niwas, Teja Singh Samundari Hall, Manji Sahib, and Diwan Hall were added later on. Under the *parikarmā* scheme, the work of dismantling of the various *bunḡās* of different Sardārs was commenced on 29 October 1943. And the *Gharyalia bunḡā* was the first one to be removed.⁸⁶

With the amendment of the Gurdwara Act in 1945 the SGPC assumed more powers and more gurudwaras were brought under its control. It became an elected body constitutionally. The pace of construction work accelerated. The work on the new *parikarmā* with three entrances was commenced. In the first floor of the southern

entrance of the Temple is located the Sikh Reference Library and to preserve the history and culture of the Sikhs the first floor of the northern entrance was converted into the Central Sikh Museum.

The second *kār sewā* (service through voluntary labour) took place in 1973. The tank was desilted after 50 years. The foundations of the main shrine, the causeway and *Har kī Pautī* were reinforced with cement and concrete. All this work was done under the supervision of Baba Jiwan Singh.

The early 1980s mark the beginning of a new era in the history of the Golden Temple. More than half a century of peace in the Temple complex stands shattered. The Temple, more than ever, has come to symbolise the Sikh psyche and its struggle for autonomy. Its possession is the major bone of contention not only among the Sikhs but also between the Sikhs and the Government. The events there are too immediate and intricate to allow an objective assessment of the whole situation.

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CHAPTER
TWO

Architectural Details

Sources of the design of the Golden Temple

From the historical survey of the Golden Temple it is evident that the temple was constructed and reconstructed several times through the ages after its first construction during the period of the fifth Guru. It is neither possible, in the absence of authentic recorded evidence, to ascertain what was the architectural character of the building in its first construction, nor is it possible to have any idea of the architectural features of the building which came successively in the trail of the reconstructions needed after each of the destructive blows that the Golden Temple received through the ages. The present building is claimed to have been constructed during the times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1799-1839).¹ Obviously, what we see today in the architecture of the Golden Temple is what has come down to us without any basic change or alteration from the time of the Maharaja. But it is not known whether, while building the present structure of the Golden Temple, the Maharaja did actually build it from scratch, or whether he followed the basic architectural layout and features of the preceding building of the Temple at the same site. In other words, the problem lies in the determination of whether the present structure follows its earlier model or in this

latest construction, the Temple building got an altogether new design and plan.

This leads us to the question of the source for the architectural design of the present structure of the Golden Temple. It appears, however, from current beliefs and hearsay that Maharaja Ranjit Singh asked for the models from the then architects, and he selected one of the models submitted by the Ramgarhias who were well-known in this branch of art at that time.² Although there is no historical record to establish this belief and hearsay, yet, giving some amount of credence to them, it is possible to conclude that what Maharaja Ranjit Singh did accomplish was actually the reconstruction of the Golden Temple afresh on an altogether new plan and design. The present structure of the Golden Temple in its architectural features, therefore, seems to be a contribution of the time and mind of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

It has been claimed that the plan and design of the Golden Temple were made after those of the tomb of saint Mian Mir of Lahore.³ This particular tomb as described by Newell has the following basic architectural features :

This famous tomb lies three miles east of Lahore, some two hundred yards south of the main road. The path to it passes the ruined baradari of Nadira Begum, a daughter of Jahan Shah. This stands in the centre of what was once a vast tank crossed by a causeway, and encircled by a masonry walk with brilliantly decorated gateways to north and south, and a domed kiosk at each corner. The story runs that from early childhood the little princess had delighted to wait upon the saint by bringing him water, wherewith to make his ablutions before prayer. When she was eleven the holy man warned her that she was now too old to appear in public. Broken-hearted at this sentence of banishment, Nadira Begam prayed to die, and passed away that same evening. The pavilion and tank to her memory were erected by her sorrowing brother, Prince Dara Shikoh.

The tomb of Mian Mir occupies the centre of a large brick-paved court enclosed by high walls with cloistered cells to south and east for dervishes and pilgrims. It stands upon a marble platform, and is a square marble building adorned with paintings and fretted screen work, a strange incongruity being the squat cupola of grey granite. Two small graves nearby are attributed to a nephew of the Saint, and to the *mistri* who designed the mausoleum and accompanying masjid to the west. Both buildings were commenced by Prince Dara Shikoh. The granite additions were constructed by Aurangzeb.

Numerous picturesque legends cluster around the name of Mian Mir. One tells how he laid the foundation stone of the Golden Temple of the Sikhs at Amritsar, by special invitation of Guru Arjun. A descendant of the Caliph Umar, he was born at Seistan in 1635 in a village near the city, where he died at the ripe age of eighty-eight. Jahangir and Jahan paid him several visits and sought his counsel, both verbally and in writing. At one time Jahangir desired to renounce the world and become his disciple. Mian Mir dissuaded him by saying that an Emperor's first duty was to his subjects. Jahan remarked that in the whole course of his life he had only found two fakirs who possessed a knowledge of God, one was Mian Mir, the other Sheikh Zaybolla of Burhanpur.⁴

It is true that the above mentioned features are shared by the Golden Temple. But on the basis of these similarities alone, it is not possible to conclude that the tomb of Mian Mir was the model on which the architecture of the Golden Temple originated. The crux of the problem lies in the determination of whether this tomb was built before the construction of the present structure of the Golden Temple and even in that case, whether the tomb actually influenced the construction of the Temple. It is not unlikely that there exists a *prima facie* similarity between the architectural features of the tomb of

Mian Mir at Lahore and those of the Golden Temple at Amritsar because both derived their architectural features from a common pool: the preceding architectural traditions and practices of the country.

It will be evident from an analytical study of the architectural features of the various limbs and lineaments of the Golden Temple, as will be undertaken subsequently, that the design, character, and fabric of most of these elements, seen in isolation, have strong resemblance to those of the various monuments and buildings of the then Mughals and Rajputs, as could be seen in Delhi, Agra, Lahore Jodhpur, Bikaner and Jaipur.⁵ It seems, therefore, that the source of the elements of architecture of the Golden Temple lies in the contemporary or preceding architectural practices of the country. The particular layout and composition of these features, as noticed in the Golden Temple, could have been either derived from a source which cannot be identified with certainty at this stage of our knowledge or it could have its roots in the inventive and imaginative genius of the Sikhs utilised judiciously and with available technical expertise for the building of this prime monument of the faith.

Moreover, another factor has to be kept in mind before suggesting an architectural indebtedness of the Golden Temple to the tomb of Mian Mir. The latter is a tomb, whereas the Golden Temple is essentially a temple—a place of worship and devotion. It is unlikely that the Sikhs would have liked the idea of deriving the architectural elements from a tomb-building, and that too belonging to an alien, and virtually an inimical faith for the construction of their most prestigious and dear monument—the Golden Temple. No conclusion therefore could be reached at on the basis of these accounts.

The drawing of Mian Mir's tomb is available in early literature.⁶ Nothing is known about the antiquity of the drawing. The question

remains whether the similarities as mentioned above, imply that the Golden Temple was built after the Tomb.

By the time the Maharaja took up the initiative to enlarge and to beautify the Golden Temple, the latter might have already acquired a name and fame not only among the followers of the faith, but also with the others. The general design and character of the building might have also been, by that time, rooted deeply in the minds of the people who saw it or came to know of it. It is therefore, not likely that the Maharaja would have gone for a major change in the architectural fabric of the Golden Temple, already well established in the minds of the people. The construction of the present structure of the Golden Temple under his patronage most likely followed the basic plan and design of the preceding one which again could have been a continuation of its predecessor. Thus the design and plan of the present structure of the Golden Temple could possibly be traced back to about the period between 1764 and 1776, when the last reconstruction took place before him. The so-called redesigning probably refers to a renovation and a comprehensive scheme of beautification of the monument undertaken by the Maharaja.

The similarity of the architecture of the Golden Temple with that of Mian Mir tomb or other similar structures may not mean much in terms of the origin of the architecture of the monument. What is unique in the Golden Temple architecture is not so much the individual features in isolation but their composition in the particular existing form. The individual features are derived, as it will be apparent from a detailed analysis in the subsequent chapter, from architectural features which were floating around in the country through Muslim architecture and the architecture of the Rajputs. The particular composition of the structure seems also to be indigenous in the concept and ideology for which the monument was built. That the main structure of the building is situated in the

centre of the tank, the Pool of Nectar, has the obvious analogy of the emergence of nectar or *amrit* from the ocean during the churning of the latter. The temple has four doorways which symbolise access to the Temple available to people of all creeds and rank. But, at the same time, they were intended presumably to proclaim the omnipresence of the *Ādi Granth* and its accessibility to people in all circumstances. Seen from these points of view, all the basic elements of the monument, and even their particular mode of composition, are found to be extant in the Indian traditions. The source of the monument, therefore, seems to be rooted in the mind and thought of the people and there is no need to look back upon the tomb of saint Miān Mir or similar other structures as the possible prototype, particularly because no clear-cut picture of their type and form could be available at the present state of the available documents, both literary and architectural.

Architectural Details

It has already been stated that the present architecture of the Golden Temple is the result of a number of anterior renovations, alterations and additions. The Temple, in its present state, has the following features :

It is a three-storeyed square building with an additional two-storeyed building of half-hexagon shape appended to the back, thus the ground plan of the Temple being resolved into what is referred to as a hexa-square. This main building is surmounted by a central domical structure and kiosks at the cardinal sides. The building is placed on a square platform in the centre of a square tank,⁷ crossed over, in the western side, by a causeway terminating into a double-storeyed entrance pavilion with an imposing archway. The sides of the square platform of the Temple serve as the *parikarmā* and a similar function is served by the paved banks of the tank. The latter is surrounded by a series of colonnaded *verandahs*. The

arched pavilion serves as the entrance gateway (*Darshani Deohri*) for an access into the causeway leading to the Temple. The precincts of the Temple and the tank have four monumental buildings, one each in the centre of the four sides. Of these the western one is not a gateway structure but the celebrated Akal Takhat which lies on the same axis line with the *Darshani Deohri* but separated by a courtyard. The two other buildings, each one with a domical top and the appurtenances of the kiosks and similar other usual architectural features, serve as the entrance to the precincts of the tank and the temple. Of these gateways, the northern one serves as the main gateway. Originally, however, there were perhaps only two gateways, the northern and the southern. The eastern one, still under construction, is presumably a later addition or an elaboration of a pre-existing smaller doorway on that side.

From a study of the available old photographs or paintings of the Temple and of the descriptive accounts left by various people from time to time, it seems that the Temple in the centre of the tank, and the causeway, and perhaps also the *Darshani Deorhi* are of sufficient antiquity. But the colonnade and the entrance gateway seem to be later additions, although the Akal Takhat was constructed during the same period as the temple, both being built during the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The question naturally arises as to what existed on the sides where the present colonnade runs and the huge gateways dominate. For an answer we have to look into the existing records, the visual documents, which will throw light on this point.

In the first quarter of the 19th century, a number of Sikh Sardars erected their *bungās* in the precincts of the Golden Temple and the holy shrine could be approached through these *bungās*. It was in 1862 that a palatial *bungā* built by Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh was demolished by the Government⁸ and a clock tower in Gothic style was erected in its place. On the assumption of the control of

the management of the shrine by the Sikhs in the beginning of the present century, a series of renovations, additions and alterations were effected to the premises of the Temple. The clock tower and the *bungās* were demolished and substituted by a colonnade guarding the *parikarmā* on all the three sides (partially the fourth side also) of the tank. Gradually a three-storeyed building with a domical superstructure was added at each of the northern and southern sides to serve as the entrance. In the eastern side, the entrance gateway, a similar big archway is still under construction. The fourth side, i.e., the western, is occupied by Sri Akal Takhat. This side is not exactly in line with the regular rectangular area of the tank, but contains a large compound between the Akal Takhat and the *Darshani* gate.

Northern Gateway

The entrance to the precincts of the Golden Temple is obtained from the northern side through a three-storeyed structure, surmounted by a domical member. This building is on a much higher level than the whole premises of the temple. Its ground floor has been divided into three sections by two rows of square pillars. Stairs leading to the upper storeys have been provided in both the sides of the entrance. To the interior side these entrances have a descending flight of steps upto the level of the *parikarmā*. On this side, the flight of steps is flanked by two octagonal cupolas and there are two smaller ones guarding the ends of the balustrades.

The first floor consists of a big hall containing paintings pertaining to Sikh history. There are projected balconies in the northern and southern sides of this floor. These balconies are flanked by two *Bukharchās* on both sides, i.e., one facing the city and the other the Temple. The central room is flanked by side rooms on eastern and western sides. The room on the eastern side is at present used as the curator's office and the room opposite to it is a part of the picture

gallery where paintings and photographs are displayed. The roof of this storey is supported by four square pillars directly rising from the ground floor. Stairs from the ground floor in the eastern and western wings open onto this gallery and lead to the upper storey also. The roof is decorated with projected eaves on all sides. Each corner possesses big cupolas having square body with three openings. A curved projected eave with small turrets in each corner beautifies the base of the fluted dome surmounted by *kalaśās*. In between the cupolas there are *chhatrīs* with three openings on each of the two longer sides and an impression of a semicircular opening in the others. The second storey consists of a small room erected exactly on the central four pillars. There are three windows in each of the sides.

The third storey has been built exactly on the walls of the second storey. There are three rectangular windows in each of its walls over which is fixed a clock, on each of its sides. The projected eave is decorated with small turrets in such a way that it goes in an arched way on each of the faces. On each corner there is a small kiosk. At the top there is the fluted dome with lotus petal base placed over a circular drum. The dome has a golden *kalaśā* fixed on an inverted lotus motif.

The Southern and the Eastern Gateways

The southern gateway, which is opposite to the entrance described above, is identical to the northern gateway in architectural design.

The eastern entrance, still under construction, seems to have been designed in a somewhat different way. It probably will have a big archway as the main architectural feature as is evident from the mode of construction still in progress. These two gateways, namely the southern and the eastern, understandably have a different function than that of the main doorway—the northern gateway.

On its western side is the Holy Akal Takhat, facing the *Darshanī Darwāzā*. In between these there is a spacious courtyard. In the northern side of the courtyard is a big archway in front of which there are two octagonal raised platforms which hold the two high Sikh standards.⁹ This archway is known as the *Jhaṇḍā Buṅgā*. A narrow lane in between the *Jhaṇḍā Buṅgā* and the Akal Takhat leads to the Gurudwara Thara Sahib.¹⁰

The Tank of Immortality

The tank is apparently square, measuring 510' × 490' at the top and 490' × 470' at the bottom, hence giving a slanting shape to the side walls with the formation of ten steps of various dimensions leading into the water. The vertical depth of the tank is 17 feet. The steps can be grouped into five units according to their spans. The second, third, fourth and fifth are of equal measurements, each having a span of 2 feet and 1.5 inches and a height of 4 feet, 4.5 inches. The width of the sixth step is 6 feet and 4 inches and has a rise of 4 feet and 4.6 inches. The seventh step has a tread of 1 foot and 6.8 inches with a height of 1' 4". The eighth and ninth steps have equal spans of 2 feet 1.6 inches. The last step, i.e., the tenth is 4 feet above the *kacchā* surface of the tank, which is 3 feet lower than the foundation of the Golden Temple. The main source of water for the tank is through a *hansalī* (canal) dug from the river Ravi in 1778.¹¹ This canal is further connected with the canal "Bari Doab". The *hansalī* was cemented long afterwards since it is known that the work was accomplished through the efforts of Sant Gurmukh Singh.¹² The construction of the canal has its own story and is said to be the result of the joint efforts of the *Udāsī* saints and the Sikh chiefs during the *misl* period.¹³ The work on the *hansalī* was initiated by two *Udāsī* saints, Bhai Pritam Dass and Bhai Santokh Singh, both from Amritsar.

Before the construction of this canal the main source of water for the sacred tank of the Golden Temple was the rains. This was an uncertain source, it could be inadequate due to the failure of the seasonal rains. And it so happened in 1783 that the water of the tank ran short, it almost dried up. Realising this problem the priests of the Harimandir and some prominent Sikhs approached the two *Udāsī* saints, who had good followings and wielded great influence in the adjoining areas also. They readily agreed to help to solve the problem permanently. Sant Santokh Singh, alongwith 500 *sadhus*, visited the Bhangi Sardar of Pathankot area for lending the required piece of land in his territory for construction of the canal from river Ravi to the tank of the Harimandir Sahib. The Bhangi Sardar willingly acceded to the request and provided the required strip of land and constructed the portion of the canal in his territory, which was taken out from Ravi at Madhopur (Gurdaspur). But according to Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia, they repaired an old channel which ran from Pathankot to Majitha in 1639 by Ali Mardan Khan, Viceroy of Lahore, and again let water into it from the Ravi. Out of the *hansalī* they made a branch leading straight to Amritsar, the actual work being done by the people through whose land it ran, who were forced to do the work by the *Udāsīs* sitting *dharnā* at their doors, by destitute people suffering from the affects of the famine of 1783, who were fed in return for their labour.¹⁴ The other chiefs were also persuaded to provide the needed strip of land in their areas for this water channel, and they too did not lag behind the Bhangi Chief in this noble cause. Each one even bore the expenses for extending the canal to the Harimandir in their areas.¹⁵ It is also said that Bhai Pritam Das constructed a portion of about one and a half kilometres of this channel. The whole project was completed in 1785.¹⁶

With the advent of British rule two more canals were constructed : they were known as the Amritsar-Lahore canal and the other, the Kasur-Sabraon Branch. With the construction of these two channels, the old *hansalī* went out of use.

After some time a new channel was taken out of the Jethuwal distributory of the Upper Bari Doab, somewhere near village Tung (Amritsar). This branch is called the *Darbār Sāhib wālī* canal. This feeds the holy Tank of the Golden Temple these days. It is 3 feet wide and 2.3 feet deep. This remained uncovered for quite a long time. The masonry work on its cover was taken in hand by Sant Sadhu Singh and Sant Gurmukh Singh of Patiala in 1919 and was completed with voluntary service and donations.

In the middle of the eastern bank there is a *pardā* bath for the ladies near the Dukh Bhanjani Beri. In a small compartment in its eastern side, the regular recitation of the holy Granth is held. Adjoining the *pardā* bath there is a raised marble platform known as Ath Sath Tirath, from where, it is claimed, the Gurus supervised the excavation of the tank and the construction of the Temple.¹⁷ In the centre a domical superstructure is placed over four tapering pillars and cusped arches. There are flights of steps for descending to the water from all the four sides of the tank. To avoid any accident or to prevent people from going deep into the tank, perforated marble walls have been put in the water. The banks of the tank which serve as the *pradakshina* is paved with marble on all sides. The cost of this marble pavement on the northern side was borne by Raja Randhir Singh of Kapurthala (1831—1870), that of the eastern and southern sides by Raja Raghbir Singh of Jind (1833—1887) and the cost for the same on the western side was met out of the income of the Temple.¹⁸

Archway (Darshani Deorhī)

On the western banks of the tank is a two-storeyed building known as *Darshani Deorhī*. It is built in the water and its western side is connected with the outer *pradakshina*. It faces the Akal Takhat. According to Giani Gian Singh, this archway was completed in 1776 alongwith the causeway and the Harimandir.¹⁹ But Sardar

Udham Singh, whose work is based upon an unpublished manuscript in the possession of the family of the late Sardar Dharam Singh (executive engineer), says that the archway was completed in 1769.²⁰ Although there exists no photographic support, it is claimed that this archway originally was a single-storeyed structure which later on, was changed to a double-storeyed one.²¹ Some scholars suggest that there was an intervening stage in which the archway had a double storeyed form in the southern wing and its northern wing had a three-storeyed structure. It is further claimed that there existed another four-storeyed building between the archway and the Akal Takhat²² in which the temple treasures were kept. This building does not exist today, but there is a painting of Sri Akal Takhat and the courtyard facing the archway, which depicts the side of such a building as it existed in between the two shrines opposite the *Jhandā Bungā*²³

The present structure of the *Darshani Deorhī* is a two-storeyed building, with almost identical architectural designs on both the wings, although their measurements differ slightly, and thus the archway does not occupy the exact central position. The whole building can be divided into three parts, i.e., the central archway and northern and southern wings.

The ground floor has the management offices in the side wings of the central doorway. There are three openings in the northern wing and one in the southern, the latter serving as the guide's office.

In between the two wings, there is a big doorway having a recessed rectangular marble opening about 10 feet high and 8 feet 6 inches wide. Overhead there is an ornamented arcaded boss consisting of nine cusps. The rectangular doorway is flanked by subsidiary blind doorways scooped into the structure, crowned with an arcaded upper part. Above these two blind doorways there are blind window motifs, each with a projected eave supported on pilasters planted on

a basement having a floral bracket support. Each of these windows is profusely ornamented and contains inscriptions. Moreover, the interspaces of the entire western facade of the *Darshani* gate are decorated with various ornamental motifs either beautiful carvings or interplay of colour and marble. The eastern facade is also similarly disposed, the basic difference being that the opening on the side facing the Golden Temple has a clear arched formation with nine-cusped designs. In addition, there is one '*bukhārchā*' (domical balcony) on either side, each one being flanked by two blind windows with arched upper ends.

The first floor contains the *Toshā Khānā* (temple treasury). It has three openings in each of its side wings, both in the western and the eastern facades. In the centre, on both the facades, there is a big projected balcony. In each, there are five openings with a circular decorative head, in which the three central openings have trefoil decorative projected arch at the top and the side openings are topped with domical motifs. These openings are formed of tapering fluted pillars and arches of cusped type. All the three units have their separate rectangular areas marked by relief design panels around them. All the four corners have round pillars from ground floor up to the top. A projected eave surmounted by low parapets and supported by brackets runs through the top of the structure on each of the facades.

At the top there are four *chhatrīs* (air houses), one each in the middle of all the four sides. Three of them have three openings in their long sides, whereas the narrow sides have single semicircular openings. The fourth one which is towards the north has three openings in the northern wall and one in each of the eastern and western sides of semicircular type. The southern side is completely closed. All these *chhatrīs* are roofed with decorative fluted domical tops with *kalaśās* on inverted lotus base at the top.

There is a minaret in each of the corners, erected on octagonal base and having eight openings. Each of these minarets has fluted domical roofs with usual *kalaśās*. The *chhatrīs* and the minarets were constructed in 1845.²⁴

According to Giani Gian Singh the gold plating on the *chhatrīs* in the eastern facade was done by Diwan Mool Raj, son of Diwan Sawan Mal, Governor of Multan, at a cost of Rs. 1,200, and the same on another, the western facade, was executed by Bhai Kahn Singh Pashauria in Śambāt 1904 (1847) at a cost of Rs. 1,000.²⁵ But none of the existing *chhatrīs* have any gold-plated surface. But the management is getting it done these days.

The doors of the *Darshani* gate have assumed great importance because of much publicised controversies. It is claimed that these doors belong to the celebrated temple of Somanath, which were taken away to Kabul by Mahmud Ghazani during his invasion of India.²⁶ Some Sikhs take pride in establishing that these doors of Somanath Temple were brought back by Maharaja Ranjit Singh's forces from Kabul and he put them in the *Darshani* gate.²⁷

The earliest work on the Golden Temple which speaks of these doors, is in the form of a monograph by H.H. Cole published in 1884. Cole writes about these doors in the following words :

The doors of the Darshani Gate are of shisham wood the front overlaid with silver, the back inlaid with ivory. The silver plated front is ornamented with panels only. The back is arranged in square and rectangular panels with geometric and floral designs, in which are introduced birds, lions, tigers and deer. Some of the ivory inlay is coloured green and red, the effect being extremely harmonious.

He further describes the Somanath Temple doors, which are at present in Agra Fort, in the following words :

The earliest specimen of oriental marquetry that I know occurs in the famous Somanath Gates, now in the Agra Fort. The elaborate Saracenic patterns on them prove that even if the wood frames were originally in the Somanath Temple they must have been re-carved by Mahmud of Gazni. They date, at all events, from the early part of the eleventh century, and having been recently cleaned one discovered to be really of sandal wood.²⁸

According to Giani Gian Singh the doors of *Darshani* gate of the Golden Temple were inlaid and silver plated during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.²⁹

Sardar Udham Singh in his monograph on the Golden Temple states that the ivory inlay work on these doors was executed by Raja Dhian Singh.³⁰

V.N. More in his work on Somanath writes :

It is also chronicled that Mahmud transported to his distant capital the exquisitely carved sandal wood doors of the shrine encrusted with silver. The well known story in connection with the sack of Somanatha, of Mahmud carrying away the gate or doors, is a myth, but may have some foundations in fact. It is almost certain that the doors had been overlaid with silver embossed work, as was a common practice; he stripped the silver off and appropriated it. The so called doors of Somanatha brought back from Ghazni in the 19th century by a British Governor-General of India, with so much ostentation, and which is now at Agra, is really an original door of Mahmud's tomb, the workmanship and proportions of which are not Hindu.³¹

On the eve of the quarter-centenary of the Foundation day of Amritsar, the Punjab Government published a small booklet on

Amritsar and a caption to a photograph of these doors as "Gates of Somanath Temple brought back from Kabul by Maharaja Ranjit Singh's forces"³² could be noticed in it.

From the above mentioned theories about these doors, three points emerge: First, whether Mahmud of Ghazni really took away the Somanath doors to Kabul or stripped off the silver and appropriated it; secondly, whether the doors which are lying in the Agra Fort are of the Somanath temple or of some other monument; and thirdly, whether the doors fixed in the *Darshani* gate originally belonged to the Somanath Temple or they were specially made for the Golden Temple.

The doors which are in the Agra Fort are probably the doors of Mahmud's tomb, because the workmanship and proportions of these are not Hindu, as opined in the above quotation by Mr. More. Mr. Cole is also not sure of their transportation to Kabul. But according to Mr. J.D. Cunningham, Maharaja Ranjit Singh did put it to the Shah of Afghanistan that he could help him get back his throne on the condition that the doors of the Somanath temple, taken away to Kabul, be restored to their original place.³³ The views regarding their fixation in the *Darshani* Gate is also based upon a legend or hearsay. No author has authenticated the point by any recorded historical evidence. Even the Punjab Government publication, titled "Amritsar" lacks the same. The statements of Mr. More and of the author of the Punjab Government publication, mentioned above, regarding the person who brought these doors back, from Kabul, are contradictory. The former is of the view that these were brought back by one of the Governor-Generals of India in the 19th century. But the latter is of the view that it was Maharaja Ranjit Singh's forces who did so. Both are without any authentic evidence.

Giani Gian Singh and Sardar Udham Singh have clearly mentioned in their works that these doors of the *Darshani* gate are made

of *shisham* wood and Mr. Cole is also of the same view, as quoted above. The latter and Mr. More write that the doors of the Somanath Temple are of *sandal* wood. So the difference between the two is very clear and beyond any doubt. Secondly, the laying of silver plates of these doors was executed during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, according to Giani Gian Singh and Sardar Udham Singh. Both even give details of the actual expenditure incurred. Thirdly, the patterns adopted in the silver plating on these doors are similar to those applied to the doors of the main *sanctum sanctorum* of the Golden Temple.

So, on the basis of the above mentioned facts we can conclude that the doors of *Darshani* gate of the Golden Temple originally belonged to it and not to the Somanath Temple.

To strengthen and authenticate these conclusions on this issue, it will be in the right spirit to quote Mr. John William Kaye's book *History of the War in Afghanistan*, which contains a footnote on proclamation of gates, October 1842.

From the Governor-General to all the Princes and Chiefs and people of India,

My brothers and My friends,

Our victorious army bears the gates of the temple of Somanath in triumph from Afghanistan, and the despoiled tomb of Sultan Mahmood looks upon the ruins of Ghuznee.

The insult of eight hundred years is at last avenged. The gate of the temple of Somanath, so long the memorial of your humiliation are become the proudest record of your national glory, the proof of your superiority in arms over the nations beyond the Indus.

To you, Princes and Chiefs of Sirhind of Rajwarra, of Malwa, and of Guzarat, I shall commit this glorious trophy of successful war.

You will yourself, with all honour, transmit the gates of sandal wood through your respective territories to the restored temple of Somanath.

The chiefs of Sirhind shall be informed at what time our victorious army will first deliver the gates of the temple into their guardianship, at the foot of the bridge of the Sutlej.

My Brothers and my friends,

I have ever relied with confidence upon your attachment to the British Government. You see how worthy, it proves itself of your love, when regarding your honour as its arms to restore to you the gates of the temple of Somanath, so long the memorial of your subjugation to the Afghans.³⁴

After reaching at the above mentioned conclusion, one point seems to be settled : that the Golden Temple is not indebted to any other antecedent monument, Indian or foreign, for its celebrated *Darshani* gate. The gates of the Somanath temple which are alleged to have been taken away to Kabul by Mahmud Ghazni and then brought back by the forces of Maharaja Ranjit Singh or by the Governor General of India as claimed above, to be fixed on the Golden Temple archway, are now lying at Agra Fort, as the evidence of both Mr. Cole and Mr. More will point to. But even on this point, as to where the original doors of the Somanath temple are now lying, there seems to be difference of opinion. Mr. Sayad Mohammad Latif claims that these gates of the Somanath temple were taken away by Mahmud but they were brought back later to be finally preserved in the British Museum, London.³⁵ Thus we have two versions regarding the present location of the original doors of the Somanath temple—they are at the Agra Fort, according to one version, and they are in the British Museum, London, according to the other. Acceptance of either of these two versions will automatically disprove the claim of some historians that the gates of the *Darshanī Deorhī* of the Golden Temple are the same as

those of the Somanath temple. To strengthen this point, the difference in the type of the wood in these two gates mentioned above has to be taken note of. From all these considerations, the gates (portals) of the *Darshanī Deorhī* of the Golden Temple seem to have been made for this temple itself, and they are not derived from any other pre-existing monument.

The *Darshanī* gate is 66' in length and 36' in width. The ante-chamber in which the gate opens is 25 feet long and 14 feet 6 inches wide. There are two stairways, one on each of the wings, leading to the upper storey, serving as the *Toshā Khānā*, where the temple treasury is located.

The embellishment of the ceilings of the ante-chamber with sheets of gilded copper was done by Raja Sangat Singh of Jind (1822--34) while the rest of the gold work was executed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.³⁶

Causeway

The *Darshanī Deorhī* opens on to the causeway or bridge that leads to the main building of the Golden Temple. It is 202 feet in length and 21 feet in width and is constructed in the water of the Pool of Nectar. The bridge is erected on 8 large and 35 small spans, which are called *Swarg Dwaries*. These are formed by trefoil arches and rectangular pillars on both sides of the bridge. Thus water can pass through these spans. There is a tunnel in the middle of the bridge (length-wise) upto the platform of the Temple proper.

Ten golden lanterns supported on tapering fluted marble pillars decorate both the sides of the causeway. These pillars are joined by latticed balustrades on both sides. These latticed balustrades were brought from the mausoleum of Jahangir at Shahdra near Lahore in 1835 by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.³⁷ He paved the bridge with coloured

marble the same year. According to another claim, it was Sardar Jodh Singh Ramgarhia who brought the latticed balustrades from Shahdra.³⁸ In the northern side, from the archway, next to the fifth post, there is a small marble post that bears a sun dial instead of the lantern. It was built by Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia in 1952.³⁹ The post was in bricks and lime earlier, and it was faced with marble by Bhai Gurbax Singh Giani in 1894.⁴⁰

The bridge was constructed by Muhammad Yar and his brothers of Amritsar who were well reputed masons and craftsmen of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time.⁴¹

Circumambulatory Path (Pradakṣiṇa)

The bridge is connected with the thirteen feet wide circumambulatory path (*Pradakṣiṇa*) which runs round the main shrine, measuring 66'—4" each side. It is open on three sides, whereas the fourth side, i.e., the eastern, is roofed along with the main shrine. Hence, it joins the roof of *Har kī Paurī* and the main shrine, on the first floor. Maharaja Ranjit Singh deputed Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia for the marble flooring of the *Pradakṣiṇa*. The latter sent Ahmed Yar, brother of Muhammad Yar Mistri, to Makrana quarry in Rajasthan. Ahmed Yar despatched marble for nine months from Makrana and breathed his last there. The work of covering the floor was completed in 1834.⁴² The gold work on six standard lamps and other small posts was completed in 1835 on the instructions of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.⁴³

Har Ki Pauri

A two storeyed structure appended to the eastern side of the Temple is an irregular quadrangle in plan. This is known as *Har kī Paurī*. In the centre of the structure, there is 8'—10" wide entrance to reach the Pool of Nectar. There is a flight of 16 marble steps des-

ending to the tank from here. These steps are flanked by two marble posts topped by gilded lanterns. In the northern and southern wings of the central entrance, stairs have been provided which move in a circular plan upto the top of the Temple with terminal openings in the first floor. Regular recitation of the *Guru Granth Sāhib* is held on both the sides, opposite to these stairs.

The first floor of *Har ki Pauri* is a large pavilion, supported and formed by semicircular arches. It is a beautiful hall exquisitely decorated with gold and mirror work in all its sides including the ceilings. Guru Nanak's *Japu* and Guru Gobind Singh's *Jap*, two long hymns in Punjabi, are inscribed in gold letters. Here also a regular recitation of the holy *Granth* is held. There is a big *bukhārchā* (domical balcony) in its eastern wall. It has three openings formed by tapering fluted pillars and cusped arches. It is roofed with a fluted dome with the usual *kalaśa* motif at the top. Through this *bukhārchā* light enters into the interior of the pavilion. At the same level two embowed windows, one on each wing, with shallow elliptical tops and supported by brackets, open into both the stairs.

Main Sanctuary

The main sanctuary of the Harimandir is a square edifice of 40'-4" × 40'-4" in dimensions erected on a square platform of 66'-4" side. Technically speaking, it is a three-storeyed building. The building proper is two-storeyed, but since there is a large pavilion with domical top in the centre of the roof, the overall character of the building assumes the form of a three-storeyed structure. This overhead pavilion is itself a complete architectural unit in the sense that it is functional and consists of a full-fledged room with all the basic architectural requirements. The cubical structure of the Temple has, on each of its facades, a division of it into two storeys. Internally also, this division of the two floors is maintained through the running galleries constituting the so-called upper storey. Taking all these into consideration, one has to see the entire structure of the Golden Temple as a three-storeyed one, functionally as well as technically.

Externally, the building has one rectangular doorway from each of its four sides. These gates were faced with marble by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.⁴⁴ The doors of the eastern and western gates were plated by him with silver in 1830 and the southern door by Rani Daya Kaur Nakai, mother of Maharaja Kharak Singh in 1830, whereas the doors of the northern gate were plated by Maharaja Kharak Singh himself in 1832, at a cost of Rs. 5,000.⁴⁵

Stairways spiral through the thickness of the wall in the northern side up to the top with a terminal in the first floor.

First floor

The front elevation that faces the causeway, on its first floor, has been divided into three parts. The central part is a large projected rectangular area, again distributed into three rectangular parts formed by fluted tapering pilasters. These rectangular areas contain rectangular openings one in each of them, decorated with repeated cusped arches. The top of these rectangular areas has been divided by pilasters into three recessed areas. The side panels contain oriel windows with elliptical tops, surmounted by a solid decorative tapering mass. These windows are supported by decorative brackets. The facades of the northern and southern sides have almost a similar architectural scheme. The roof of the first floor is at the height of 26'—9" and is provided with elliptical cornice 2' - 6" in width which encircles the whole building, including the *Har Ki Pauri*.

The eastern facade of the main sanctuary has only one big semicircular opening on the roof of the covered *Pradakṣiṇa*. On both the side walls of the *Pradakṣiṇa* roof, there are three trefoil windows formed within another area demarcated by fluted tapering pilasters and cusped arches. Above them another arch has been repeated.

Second Floor

At the top of the first floor a 4' high parapet rises on all sides, which is intercepted by four rectangular *mamties* (chambers), i.e., two in the western side and two others at the tops of side wings of the *Har ki Pauri*. Three of these chambers are the openings of three stairways whereas the fourth one is a small store room. The parapet has been decorated with small turrets, 58 in number, with their individual square base of 2' in side. The four architectural members in the four corners are crowned with cupolas. The lower parts of two of them facing the archway (*Darshani* gate) are square in shape and have three openings in each side, formed by fluted tapering pillars and trefoil arches. A projected eave, surmounted by five small turrets in each side and a larger one in each corner, decorates them. These are roofed with fluted domes surmounted by *kalaśās* on the inverted lotus bases.

The cupolas on the *Har ki Pauri* are octagonal with eight openings formed by fluted tapering pillars and trefoil arches. A projected eave runs round the top. The turrets are conspicuous by their absence. These cupolas have fluted domical tops with usual *kalaśās* on inverted lotus bases.

Exactly on the top of the central hall of the main sanctuary rises the third storey in the form of a small square room having three gates formed of fluted tapering pilasters and cusped arches in each side. The semicircular tympanum (formed by the top of the gate and cusped arch) below the projected cusped eave at the top of this room has been divided into rectangular areas by pilasters on all the four sides.

Finally springs the low fluted *gumbaz* (dome) having lotus petal motif in relief at the base and inverted lotus at the top which supports the *kalaśā* having a beautiful *chhatrī* at the end. This work of art was executed by Shri Harnam Das, a goldsmith of Amritsar.⁴⁶

The dome at its base has a series of small turrets, 36 in number (nine in each side), and one kiosk in each corner.

All the exterior corners have fluted pilasters on all the stages. There is an iron Sikh standard fluttering at the roof of the eastern side of the *Har ki Pauri*. It was installed by Sardar Jetha Singh Majithia in 1823. Earlier it was of wood. Shri Ram Kishan, Issa Dass, Lal Chand and Maingal Khatra got it gilded in 1836 at their own cost.⁴⁷

Ground Floor (Interior)

The interior of the ground floor of the main shrine is divided into a central square hall, side chambers and small pavilions in the four corners, formed by square pillars and semi-circular arches. In the central hall, which is 17' × 17' in dimension, the holy Sikh Scripture, *Guru Granth Sāhib*, is placed on a small low bed in its eastern side under a beautiful canopy. The chamber in the north-western corner just below the stairs is occupied by the Temple treasury where day-to-day collections of the donation money is kept, before it is carried over to the main *Toshā Khānā* situated in the second storey of the *Darshanī Deorhī*. The small room or the temple treasury appears to have been added afterwards by converting the corner chamber into a small room.

First Floor (Interior)

The architectural arrangement of the first floor is almost the same as that of the ground floor with the exception that there is no roof on the central hall, hence the side chambers and corner pavilions form a kind of gallery on all the sides through which devotees go round to perform the *parikarma*, the ritual circumambulation. The roof of the gallery is supported by four piers and big vaults on all sides. There are three openings in each side. But only the two

on the eastern side being functional, the third one is closed and decorated with mirrors of different sizes. All these openings are formed by square pillars and nine cusped arches within their individual rectangular areas in the internal side, i.e., in the hall. These square pillars have tapering pilasters on them. Marble slabs have been put up in each opening at the bottom towards the central hall. Devotees sit here to listen to the holy music. There is a small pavilion known as *Sheesh Mahal*, a hall of mirrors, on this floor (including the *Har kī Paurī*), which is the place where, it is believed, Guru Arjan Dev used to sit for contemplation.

Architecturally, the Golden Temple is a monumental one if one takes into account its huge layout, the colonnades, the imposing *Darshanī gate* and the causeway alongwith the beautiful tank to give it support, floating as if, on the Pool of Nectar. But the structure of the main building of the Golden Temple is comparatively simpler and without much of novelty in the sense that it does not contain any basic architectural element that can be termed as something unrelated to the architectural conventions of the faith concerned. The four gateways, one on each of its sides, of course, are something new and novel that one finds here. Presumably this is the earliest occurrence of such a feature in a Sikh monument. It has been claimed that these four gateways symbolise the spirit of casteless society that the religion stands for. Although the implication might be the accessibility of the temple to people of all classes, castes, creeds and sex, yet one can perhaps see them as intended for providing a continuing view (*Darshan*) of the *Guru Granth Sāhib* installed inside, while undergoing the process of the *Pradakshina* or circumambulation.

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7. Apparently it seems to be square in shape but in actual measurement it is found to be rectangular with the measurements (Length 510' and breadth 490').
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9. Giani Gian Singh in his book *Tawārikh Sri Amritsar* (Punjabi) published in 1977, on page 51, states that earlier there was a wooden Sikh standard which was placed by Bawa Pritam Dass, and Sardar Desa Singh Majithia replaced it with a new iron Sikh standard duly polished in gold in Samvat 1880 (1823 A.D.) But that too broke down and Sardar Lehna Singh repaired the same in Samvat 1898 (1841 A.D.) The second Sikh standard (Nishān Sāhib) was erected by Maharaja Sher Singh on the eve of his coronation.
10. This Gurudwara building has been erected in recent times to commemorate the visit of the ninth Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur.
11. Giani, Gian Singh, *Tarikh-i-Amritsar*, (Urdu), Patiala 1889, p. 21. But according to Sardar Jagjit Singh, the water channel was dug by the Sikhs long ago before the British rule in 1781 to provide river water from the Ravi to the sacred tank of Amritsar. This all was due to the efforts of Sant Pritam Das and Santokh Das. See his book *Temple of Spirituality*, p. 75 (foot Note).
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CHAPTER
THREE

Beautification and Embellishment

The whole building of the Golden Temple has been embellished in such a marvellous manner with floral designs, either painted or in terra-cotta, embossed in metal and precious stones, as there is hardly any other contemporary building in the whole of northern India which surpasses its beauty. It looks like a gem glittering in the middle of the Tank of Immortality during the day and on festive occasions while illuminated at night by the management, and dazzles the eyes of the devotees. For the Sikhs, this temple is one of the wonders of the earth, that gives a vision of divine beauty to pilgrims.

The work for the beautification of the Harimandir was taken in hand by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and to meet the expenses he contributed Rs. 5,00,000 at the very start of the project in 1803.¹ An inscription over the western entrance of the main shrine commemorates the act :

The Great Guru in His Wisdom looked upon Maharaja Ranjit Singh as his chief servitor and Sikh, in his benevolence, bestowed on him the privilege of serving the Temple.

The whole work of gold plating (gilded copper) was executed by Mistri Mohammad Yar Khan of Amritsar under the expert technical supervision of Bhai Sant Singh Giani. The first plate of gilded copper in the Golden Temple was fixed in A.D. 1803.²

The lower parts of the walls of the building are faced with marble slabs inlaid with arabesques of conventional flower sprays in precious stones of different sizes, shapes, colours and shades; red, green, blue, yellow, grey, pink, brown, black and white. The inlaid work is exquisite, Mr. J.L. Kipling, the late Principal of the Mayo School of Art, Lahore, writes :

Not only is the upper storey of the Darbar Sahib sheathed in plates of richly embossed and heavily gilded beaten work in copper, but the lower storey is encased in a panelling or wainscot of slabs of marble inlaid with cornelian, mother of pearl, serpentine, lapis lazuli and other stones, resembling the work of Agra Mumtaz Mahal but marked by some notable difference of artistic treatment—the difference lying in the introduction of living forms such as fishes, birds and animals. The designs too, though over suave and flowing in the line like all modern Indian work and less Italian in character of all Sikh ornament which is much easier to recognise than describe.³

The inlay work of floral decoration on the walls in the ground floor (interior and exterior) was executed by the Muslim masons from Chiniot (Pakistan) under the supervision of Badaru Mohiuddin, the Chief Architect. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, the task of completing the beautificatory work fell to Sardar Bhagwan Singh Jamadar, Sardar Mangal Singh Ramgarhia and Rai Bahadur Kalyan Singh. And it was completed by the local Hindu and Sikh craftsmen.⁴

The exterior of the upper storey including the parapets, cornices, the roof, columns, kiosks and cupolas—almost the whole

space available with the exception of the marble floor—is a glittering mass of gilded copper. The eastern loggia of the temple was got gold plated by Rani Sada Kaur, mother-in-law of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, at a cost of Rs. 1,75,300 and the remaining three sides were done by the Maharaja himself at a cost of Rs. 5,35,332.⁵

The other persons who shared the decoration work in the first floor were Sardar Sobha Singh Nakai, Shri Bansi Ram, son of Sardar Jodh Singh Diwan Bhangi of village Sohlan.⁶

According to Giani Gian Singh, “The roofs of *Darbār Sāhib* and *Har ki Pauri* were silver plated by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Samvat 1877 (1820) and Maharaja Kharak Singh in Samvat 1894 (1837). But due to climatic effect the colour of the silver became blackish. So in 1908 Samvat (1851), under instructions from the British Government, the silver plates were removed and disposed of through Sardar Jodh Singh, *Sarbrāh* (manager) of the Shrine to be substituted with gilded copper. The roofs were gilded by Sardar Amir Singh Sandhawalia in 1817 and the stairs along with the domical balcony (*bukhārchā*) were gilded by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1876 Samvat (1819). The roof of the lower stairs was embellished by Raja Sarup Singh of Jind (1837-64) through *Mahant* (priest) Sahib Banga in 1860 at a cost of Rs. 11,000.⁷ These roofs of the stairs have idealised forms of flowers and leaves, some birds and pots have also been introduced in these fresco paintings. These paintings possess the original blend and have not been retouched under the renovation programme so far.

The other persons who contributed earlier for the silver plating of the ceiling of the ground floor were Sardar Tara Singh Gaba, Sardar Partap Singh, Sardar Jassa Singh and Sardar Ganda Singh Peshawaria in Samvat 1887 (1823).⁸

The *Shīsh Mahal* (Hall of Mirrors) where Guru Arjan Dev used to sit in meditation as well as for the supervision of the cons-

truction work of the temple, was beautified by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Here the artists employed the *Jaratkārī* technique. Mirrors and pieces of glass in different shapes and sizes were set in plaster of paris, which was painted in golden and other colours afterwards.⁹

The central dome, including kiosks and the turrets, was covered with gilded copper by Sardar Bhag Singh Ahluwalia and Sardar Fateh Singh Ahluwalia in Samvat 1873 (1816). Twelve gates on the third storey (the room that supports the dome) were decorated by Sardar Basant Singh Kheri, gold plating on the *chhatrīs* (air houses) on the western side were done by Sardar Hukam Singh Chimni in 1823 and others by the Maharaja himself.¹⁰

The interior of the Golden Temple is exquisitely beautified and ornamented with floral designs, either painted in temeptra techniques or embossed in metal. The skilful harmony of brass and gilded copper, cut clay with pieces of mirror in various sizes and shapes and the encrusted precious stones have been employed here. Hymns of the Gurus have been embossed in certain spaces over the alcoves. The craftsmanship of this *jaratkārī* mosaic reminds us of the Pietre Dura tradition. It somewhat resembles the Mughal technique used for the decoration of the Taj Mahal at Agra.

“The frescoes executed on the temple walls are of a nature very different from those of Ajanta, Ellora and Bagh Caves,” says Late Shri Thakar Singh, a reputed artist from Amritsar. “From the point of view of technique these frescoes herald altogether a new era in this particular branch of painting.”¹¹

Mr. W. Wakefield has referred to murals depicting erotic subjects that covered the walls of the Golden Temple.¹² Now what we see in the category of mural paintings is floral patterns interspersed with animal and bird motifs. There are about 300 different designs on the walls of the Golden Temple, which, viewed from a distance, look like a hung Persian carpet. The *naqqāśas*

(painters) had coined their own terminology to distinguish between various designs. Among these the most prominent is known as the *dehin*, a medium of expression of the imaginative study of the idealised forms. Some such paintings show a rich colourful representation and floral and zoological designs, some having mythological significance picked up from Hindu scriptures such as the destruction of demonical forces of evil by those of good. Some of these paintings reflect the original spirit of the Vaiṣṇava cult. There is a *yogi* in *padmāsana*. Apart from these motifs the artists have depicted a variety of animals and birds such as fish, crocodile, the elephant the serpent, etc. They have their symbolic meanings here. The painters of these frescoes have put their heart and soul into the work to make it more like an original school of art. No doubt these artists borrowed extensively from the Muslim and Hindu traditions but they depicted them in their own way and in new setting. Some motifs are the adaptation from Hindu, the Mughal and the Persian. All these frescoes have been given a border on all the four sides in beautiful traditional designs.

One can find the only surviving mural painting depicting human figures on a wall in the small compartment on the first floor, over the narrow stairs leading to the top of the shrine, in the northern outer wall. In this painting, Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Master of the faith, is shown on horseback in the company of five beloved ones, with an attendant holding a *chauri* (flywhisk) behind the horse. One of the leading persons holds a falcon on his right hand whereas the second one is carrying the Sikh standard. We find some typical motifs of weapons depicted on this flag. A running dog has also been painted near the horse. This painting has been fully retouched sometime back, thus losing its original blend of colours. According to the late Bhai Gian Singh *Naqqās*, who worked for about 32 years, this painting was painted by an artist from Kangra specially commissioned by Maharaja Ranjit Singh for this purpose. It is said that the mural depicting Guru Gobind Singh and the five

beloved ones is a copy of a miniature painting that originally was in the collection of Raja Sansar Chand of erstwhile Kangra State and that Maharaja Ranjit Singh wanted the same to be copied in the form of a wall painting in the Harimandir. Since the original painter of the miniature had already expired, the desired mural was executed by the grandson of the deceased artist.¹³

The arches and alcoves of the central hall have been ornamented with floral designs along with verses from the holy scriptures of the Sikhs (*Guru Granth Sāhib*). This seems to have been borrowed from the Muslim technique of engraving of verses from the holy Quran.

In the opinion of Percy Brown:

As an example not so much of architectural style but of religious emotion materialised in marble, glass, colours and metal, the Golden Temple at Amritsar is equalled only by Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Rangoon; the former symbolises the faith of the Sikhs and the latter is the highest expression in a very similar range of material of another Indian religion, that of the Buddhists.¹⁴

Dr. Madanjit Kaur while commenting on the decoration and embellishment of the Golden Temple, sums up thus:

The walls of the Golden Temple contain a variety of excellent *Mohrākashī* or fresco-painting. These frescoes are said to be modelled after the wall paintings of its time found in the Kangra valley.

Most of the fresco-paintings of the Golden Temple are representations of Hindu mythological themes. They reflect the original spirit of the Vaishnava cult, but the technique has been modified to suit the needs of Sikh art. It is to be noted here that the tolerance of the Sikhs towards other religions motivated the Sikh artists to borrow extensively from both Hindu and the

Muslim traditions. Moreover, it reflects the practical outlook of the Sikh artists who had not enough time to make experiments of their own. Hence they borrowed the fresco technique from the Hindu tradition. For example, the fresco paintings depict a number of animals pouncing upon one another, symbolic of the struggle for existence. Then there is a *Yogi* in *padamāsana* over and above a number of ferocious animals, the tiger, the lion and the snake. This symbolises mastery over animal instincts and worldly fears, still another may be the *kalaśa* (a water-pot) with fruits, flowers and leaves, all symbolising material prosperity and goodwill.

Most of the fresco paintings are, thus, an adaptation of the Hindu, the Persian and the Mughal motifs. Still the distinctive setting and combination of plants, flowers, birds and animals betray some originality. These do not merely repeat the old theme in the old style but show dimensions with added meaning. The Sikh craftsman expanded the canvas of the Hindu fresco from the Krishna cult to the pantheistic trend. Although the Sikh artists adopted the Mughal *Mohrākashī* style involving the Iranian motifs of relief of gold flowers of glamorous colours and geometrical designs, yet the Sikh artists penetrated deep into the spirit of the art and depicted fine samples of their own. Consequently human figures, animals, birds, flowers and leaves can be seen drawn in their natural but at once beautiful settings. Bright colours, cut-glass and coloured stones have frequently been used. Beautiful borders in traditional designs enhance the aesthetic value of the mural paintings. Taking stock of the whole, the contribution of the Golden Temple to the art of fresco painting lies in the preservation of the native tradition and in an extension of the art of the Kangra and allied schools. Apart from floral depictions there are a number of fresco paintings depicting creatures as if from real life. To give them their appropriate setting aquatic

animals, i.e., the *machh* (fish), the *kachh* (crocodile), etc. are drawn on the nether part of the frescoes, while the animals figure in the middle and the birds in the upper part. The idea sought to be conveyed through depiction of *jal-jīwās* is that just as these creatures cannot live without *māya* (desires). The central parts of the walls depict *asthal jantus* (earthly creatures), e.g., the elephant, the serpent and others. The elephant symbolises splendour and power in man (the traditional Indian view) and the snake represents greed (*lobh*). Some of the paintings show elephants in chains, the idea appears to be that human passions can be controlled and mastered through mental discipline and the recitation of *bāṇi*. A child is also shown there. The child represents the innocent soul. A snake is coiled around the child, suggesting that the innocent soul (*jīva* or being) is a prisoner of greed of the world (*māya*). The idea seems to be that by virtue of *nām* and *simran* (the recitation of God's Name) the soul is released from the clutches of greed. The upper portion of the drawings represents the winged wonders of the sky, for example, the peacock and the pigeon. The peacock represents the good self (super ego) in man and the pigeon is symbolic of peace. Some paintings depict the *Yogi* and the *Kalāśa*, in some others, serpents, elephants and angels are shown in chains. Fairies too can be seen following one another in a chain. The fairies have Persian caps on their heads reminding the onlookers of the Persian elements in these paintings.¹⁵

The embellishment of the ceilings of the *Darshanī Deorhī* was done under the patronage of Raja Sangat Singh (1822-34) of the erstwhile State of Jind (Punjab), while the rest of the gold work was got executed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.¹⁶ On the interior side walls of the archway one can find beautiful specimens of inlay work. And the roof is decorated with the usual floral designs painted in various colours and cut clay with pieces of mirror in different shapes

and sizes have been employed. This part of decoration finds its similarity in designs and motifs with the technique and style including the materials and motifs of the main shrine (*sanctum sanctorum*).

Describing the beautification work on the portals of the *Darshani Deorhi*, H.H. Cole writes:

The doors of Darshani Gate are of Sheesham wood, the front over laid silver, the back in laid with ivory. The silver plated front is ornamented with pannels only. The back arranged in square and rectangular pannels with geometric and floral designs, in which are introduced birds, lions, tigers and deer. Some of the ivory inlay is coloured green and red the effect being extremely harmonious.¹⁷

Mr. Fergusson compares the ornamentation of the seportals of the archway with those of the states of a mosque in Cairo in the following comments:

The carved ornaments on them are so similar to those found at Cairo in the Mosque of Ebn Touloun (A.D. 885) and other buildings of that age, as not only to prove they are of the same date, but also to show how similar were the modes of decoration at these two extremities of the Moslem Empire at the time of their execution.¹⁸

The portals of the archway are plated with silver on the front side and at the rear these are magnificently decorated in panels with artistic ivory inlay work. This part of the gates has suffered some neglect and the artistic work is in need of immediate attention to preserve its beauty for many more generations of devotees to enjoy and appreciate.

As it has already been stated that Maharaja Ranjit Singh was all out for the beautification of Temple and contributed handsomely

for this purpose, he appointed Giani Sant Singh for the supervision of this work. Giani Sant Singh hailed from the ancient town of Chiniot (now in Pakistan) and the muslim painters of Chiniot were famous for their expertise in the art of mural painting and allied arts. So he was asked to bring some.

The *Naqqāśās* (painters) who were assigned the ornamentation and beautification of the holy shrine mostly did *gāch* (limestone) work in the interior of the Temple and also set pieces of glass and mirror in the limestone, which was painted in golden and other colours afterwards.¹⁹

After some time some local mason artists emerged in this art of mural painting and a new school of Sikh Art came into existence. Its artists surpassed their predecessors in this style. In the second decade of the nineteenth century a local artist named Sher Singh was sent by Maharaja Ranjit Singh to Lahore fort, where he applied his skill and produced fine specimens of floral designs. The Maharaja was immensely impressed and employed him in the beautification of the Golden Temple. One of the sons of the Maharaja was also named Sher Singh, and Ranjit Singh did not relish the idea of one of his employees having an identical name. So he changed the name of this artist to Kehar Singh. He worked in the temple for quite a long time. Two nephews of Kehar Singh, namely Sardar Kishan Singh and Sardar Bishan Singh, learnt this art from him and both excelled in the art of mural painting. They also learnt the technique of fresco painting from Kangra. Sardar Bishan Singh also got training in this art from Master Jai Singh. His work can be seen in the first floor of the Central shrine. He also decorated the roof of the two staircases with floral designs. His last work dated 1941 B.K. (A.D. 1834) is preserved in the eastern wing of the first floor. These two artists added rich colours to their paintings and introduced light and shade to make them more effective.²⁰ These are the best specimens of their skill. Sardar Arur

Singh, manager of the Golden Temple, covered these paintings with glass. Another local artist, Mahant Ishar Singh, adopted the style of Kehar Singh and decorated the *Darshanī Deorhī*. This artist also painted the interiors of the old building of Gurudwara Shahidan, Amritsar including some other shrines.²¹

Sardar Bishan Singh had two sons, Jawahar Singh and Nihal Singh. Both of them followed their father in the art of fresco painting and worked very hard and successfully to improve upon the *Tukrī* and *Gach* work technique of decoration work. The specimen of their work can be seen in the hall of the first floor of the main building of the temple. Both the brothers spent their whole life in the service of the holy shrine.

Nihal Singh had no issue, so he was succeeded by Bhai Gian Singh *Naqqās* who was a versatile artist of this line of *naqqāsas*. He surpassed all his predecessors including Sardar Nihal Singh from whom he learnt this art of fresco painting. He studied Kangra style of fresco painting too, which influenced his artistic style considerably. Bhai Gian Singh had zealously worked in the Harimandir for about thirty-two years.²² He maintained the traditional motifs of flowers and leaves and introduced figures of animals into them. He treated these motifs in a very realistic manner, giving them some decorative forms to create balance and rhythm. Bhai Gian Singh introduced many new innovations through his long experience. He not only drew coloured sketches for murals but also transferred them on marble slabs which were in turn inlaid by experts from Rajasthan and Delhi. Some of his specimens can be seen on the first floor of the main shrine of the Golden Temple. Bhai Gian Singh decorated the walls, pillars and pilasters of the third storey which supports the fluted dome. We find his name along with date painted at the bottom of one of the pillars of the eastern gates. In his paintings he employed bright colours. For his excellent and superb work, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee honoured him with a robe of honour in 1949.²³ He breathed his last in 1953 at the ripe

age of 70. After his death there was no artist who could adopt his technique and method of his great style. Succeeding artists switched over to oil painting under the influence of Western art. Thus, the decline of the Sikh School of *Naqqāsi* set in.

There was another family of artists working in the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and they too were contributing considerably to the ornamentation of the Golden Temple, at the same time when Sardar Kehar Singh and others were busy in the holy shrine. The group of artists was lead by Bhai Jawala Singh *Naqqās* who beautified the southern side of the main shrine to a degree of excellence. His son Bhai Mehtab Singh succeeded him in the art of the fresco painting in the Harimandir. Sardar Jawala Singh and Sardar Mehtab Singh also painted the whole life of Guru Nanak (*Janam sākhi*) on the first floor of Gurudwara Baba Atal, Amritsar. They also embellished the walls of Darbār Sāhib, Tarn Tāran and Goindwāl Sāhib (Amritsar).²⁴ They imparted their superb skill to Bhai Harnam Singh, who was employed in the decoration work of the Golden Temple after the death of Bhai Gian Singh. Bhai Harnam Singh adopted mixed medium. e.g. *gach* along with oil painting in his work. After Sardar Harnam Singh, Bhai Atma Singh, son of Sardar Mehtab Singh, was engaged in the decoration work of the Golden Temple. He had some traits of Bhai Gian Singh *Naqqās*, but he too adopted oil colours for his work. He spent most of his time in the retouching and colouring of the decaying murals in the holy shrine. In some of the existing frescoes he has added the paintings of some of the Gurudwaras. Sardar Pritam Singh and Sardar Harbhajan Singh had been engaged in retouching and preserving the existing beautiful art work in the Harimandir some time back.

Technique of Fresco Painting in the Golden Temple

In the process of decorations and ornamentations, the generations of artists have adopted various methods and techniques to execute their work. The most popular among these are fresco paintings, *gach*, *jaratkārī* and inlay work. The technique of 'fresco

painting' in all the Sikh shrines was almost a common process. The technique is called *Mohrā Kashī* (fresco painting). It was also called *Jodhpurī hunar*, probably because the technique might have been borrowed from Jodhpur.

The walls on which these frescoes were executed were of bricks baked to a fresh looking red and were laid in sand-lime mortar. Lime was the basic material in the preparation of the surface. It was applied on wet walls, Plaster made of slaked lime and sand was driven well into the joints and then beaten all over with a long strip of wood (called *garmālā*) edgeways until it became plain and slightly dry and, thus, ready to receive the coat of intonaco, the finely grained plaster layer covering the rougher arricio. The intonaco plaster was prepared from the compound of slaked lime and finely pulverised marble meal. In the form of a cream it was applied to the wet wall plaster and rubbed over the ground to make it set. After this plaster became a little dry and sticky, it was polished with an agate polishing stone until on the surface the drawing was cast. According to the late Bhai Gian Singh *Naqqās*:

The sequence to be painted is originally drawn in pencil or charcoal on a sheet of reasonably thick paper. The entire drawing is then perforated, care being taken to see that perforation is even and perfect. The perforated drawing is called '*Khākā*'.

To start off, one square foot of the brick work on the even wall is made, and kept wet to requirement by continuous sprinkling of water. Thereafter the area is plastered with lime (This plaster is called *pora*) on this plaster is cast a layer of '*dogā*', the curd like residue of white plaster prepared from burnt and drenched marble duly cloth-filtered. Before casting '*dogā*', the '*pora*' is plastered with the rough remains, called '*kuttā*', of white marble plaster, from the cloth-filtered materials. This makes the lime plaster stronger as well as whiter than its original condition. When the *dogā* is yet wet, the drawing is cast on the area by means of charcoal dust sprinkled, from cloth-knots (called *potlī*), on and through the perforated drawing contacting the plaster. Immediately thereafter the ground being still wet colours

are distributed in the different planes of the drawing transferred on the plaster. The colours are then set into the plaster by means of a small wood shovel (called *nehlā*) with slight bunch in the middle. This shovel is kept constantly thumping gently on the wet plaster manually. This process requires unabated attention, and artists are known to have generally gone without meals to ensure the setting in of colours before the plaster dried up.

Once these colours are thus established, further colour coatings are gone into for bringing out details, giving tones to the required planes and for imparting the final touches to the painting. An important pre-requisite of this entire operations is that the area is definitely wet throughout the operation.

In these fresco paintings only six colours red, yellow, blue, green, black and white were used. There were pigments mostly extracted from stones, earth, leaves, flowers, charcoal, soot and similar ingredients.

- Red : This colour was prepared from an indigenous clay called '*hurmachi*'. It is available with grocers who brought it from hilly areas. It was pulverised by constant rubbing with water on stone slabs.
- Green : It was extracted from a green stone, small chips of *terra verta* called '*sange-sabaz*'.
- Yellow : This colour was obtained from yellow clay called '*puri*'.
- Blue : It was a mixture of ultramarine with process glue. It was also made from *lapis-lazuli*.
- Black : Was prepared from burnt coconut crust or from the smoke of mustard in earthen lamps.
- White : Burnt marble chips were drenched in water. The mixture was then filtered. The curdlike substance thus settled. This is also called '*dogā*'.

These colours were always kept wet during the period of their use in a fresco painting. Dried up colours were of no use. The

artists prepared their brushes themselves. The squirrel tail or goat and camel hair were employed in these brushes.

Gāch work : *Gāch* was a sort of stone or gypsum. This was proportioned and fried in a pan. When it formed a paste, it was put to use on the walls like lime. It was further prepared by mixing in water, only in such a limited quantity as the painter could at a time use it.

Tukrī work : *Tukrī* work is another form of *Gāch* work. It involves the setting of the pieces (*tukrīs*) of glass of various sizes in the cut clay work. In this technique *Gach* work is fashioned out in various designs and patterns and is then inlaid with coloured glass, mirror glass pieces, gold leaves. etc.

The other technique of *Gāch* work is known as *panchhī kāri*. Original thin glass pots painted with mercury from inside are cut into various sizes with the help of the sharp edge of a special stone, called '*krund*', to suit the floral patterns cut from *Gach* work or cut clay.

Jarat kāri : Also known (*munavat*) involves the in-laying of coloured stone in marble. The drawings for this inlay work are prepared by the artists and are transferred to marble slabs. The marble stone dresser (*pathar ghara*) engraves the required depths in the marble slab. According to the designs of this drawing and colour scheme, the multi-coloured stones were cut by the coloured stone dressers called *begāria*. These patterns are then set in the marble slab by the stone dresser (*Pather-Ghārā*).

The following stones are generally employed in *Jarat Kari* :

1. *Haquique*-Red and pink shade.
2. *Zehir Mora*-green.
3. *Khattu pathar*-yellow.
4. *Sabaz pathar (Ghear)*-dark green.
5. *Sabaz pathar (Nargis)*-green.
6. *Sang yashap*-green, light, green, white and blue.
7. *Sang pasham*-light green.
8. *Lajward*-ultramarine.

9. Black marble.
10. Arabic *Surak*-light black and other kinds of stones.²⁵

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CHAPTER
FOUR

Architectural Analysis

After a detailed study of the history, art and architecture of the Golden Temple, some vital points emerge. That this is one of the earliest religious buildings of the Sikh faith, constructed for congregational and devotional aims is all too evident. The building of this shrine is raised on a lower base than the structures in the vicinity, unlike a mosque or a Hindu temple which are usually constructed on raised high platforms. The Golden Temple is the soul-stirring expression of intense religious emotion of the Sikhs materialised in marble, glass, colour and metal. The catholicity and universality of the Sikh faith are two characteristics which make it the devotees' ultimate sanctuary. Thus, ever as a magnificent symbol, this temple is accessible to every person without any distinction of caste, creed and sex for congregational worship.

The building of the Golden Temple is an object of unique beauty from the point of its art and architecture. It forms the basis for the construction of various Sikh Gurudwara buildings. It is said that the architecture of the Golden Temple is the late form of the Mughal style of architecture and represents the last flicker of

religious architecture in India.¹ Its custodians adopted the Muslim architecture and harmonised it with the Hindu style and the Golden Temple is one of the best specimens of such architecture.² It is a lively blend of Mughal and Rajput architectural styles prevalent at that time. Ribbed dome surmounted by finial, foliated arches, inlay work in marble, fresco paintings (mosaic) and inset letters (hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib) in cut clay or plaster of paris in golden colour against a different background are doubtlessly of Mughal style and embowed windows, eaves supported on decorative elliptical cornices, *chhatrīs*, richly decorative friezes, etc. have been derived from the Rajput architecture which can be found in the royal buildings in Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and in other cities of Rajasthan.

In the words of Mulk Raj Anand :

The Hindu *Kalaśa*, based on mount Kailash, atop this shrine is a fanciful elaboration of the Islamic dome—above the Hindu cubist architecture, inspired by the synthetic Sikh faith.³

From the architectural point of view, this dome represents neither the Hindu form nor the Mughal. It displays an evolution and synthesis of both. The architecture of the Golden Temple or Harimandir possesses some rare characteristics which have created an independent Sikh school of architecture in the history of Indian art. The characteristics include :

A square or cubist structure surmounted by a low fluted dome which springs from a lotus design and having a *kalaśa* or finial at the top with an inverted lotus base ;

four smaller cupolas, one in each corner, almost of the same design as the central dome ;

a frieze of turrets or kiosks on the parapet, an elliptical cornice supported on decorative brackets, projected windows, and emphasis on string courses ;

the division of the facades into square or rectangular shapes according to the requirements for embellishment and decorations in marble, colour or metal ;

corner attached pillars, four entrances one in each facade ;

chhatrīs or air houses on the top of the archway ;

a fluttering Sikh standard (flag) with religious insignia and attached community kitchen where food is served free to every one, irrespective of his status or creed ; and

finally a high class artistic decoration in cut clay, *gāch*, marble inlay, fresco painting (mosaic) or metal, i.e., gilded copper.

All these collectively formed a model design of religious architecture for future Sikh shrines. One can find the adaptation of this architectural design and layout in the religious buildings of Sri Darbar Sahib, Tran Taran, Goindwal Sahib, Khadoor Sahib (Amritsar), Dukh Niwaran (Patiala), Sangrur, Muktsar (Faridkot), Kartarpur (Jalandhar), Kiratpur Sahib and Anandpur Sahib (Ropar) and many other Sikh shrines in India and the present Punjab. Even the architectural design of the Golden Temple has been adopted with minor variations in the Sikh Temples at Patna (Bihar) and Nanded (Maharashtra). Most of the buildings of *Gurudwaras* situated in Pakistan are modelled after the characteristics of the Golden Temple which is a splendid example of religious architecture in India. Percy Brown, an authority on Indian architecture sums up the salient architectural features of this sacred shrine in the following words :

The architectural style therefore adopted by the Sikhs, while, in appearance, of Mughal extraction, as the result of adaptations combined with elaborations, presents a certain characteri-

stics of its own, not however, difficult to identify. Among its typical features are the multiplicity of *chhatris* or kiosks which ornament the parapets, angles, and every prominence or projections; the invariable use of the fluted dome generally covered with brass or copper gilt, the frequent introduction of oriel or embowed windows with shallow elliptical cornices and supported on brackets, and the enrichment of all arches by means of numerous foliations. From this it will be seen that details of a somewhat florid order dominate the style, but although few of the structures of the Sikhs aspire to any special architectural significance, no one can fail to be attracted by their animated and picturesque appearance. Buildings of this kind are to be found in many towns of the Punjab, but the principal example is the celebrated Golden Temple at Amritsar, a monument in which all the characteristics of the style are fully represented.”⁴

The Golden Temple stands out with its aesthetic and ornamental distinctiveness as the single monument combining as if, all the dreams, aspirations, beliefs and convictions of the community that it represents. It is undoubtedly the gain of Sikh Architecture, and the name Golden Temple not only literally implies its priceless importance, but perhaps it has a point to indicate its spiritual grandeur and distinctiveness in the whole realm of medieval Indian architecture of the post-Islamic epoch.

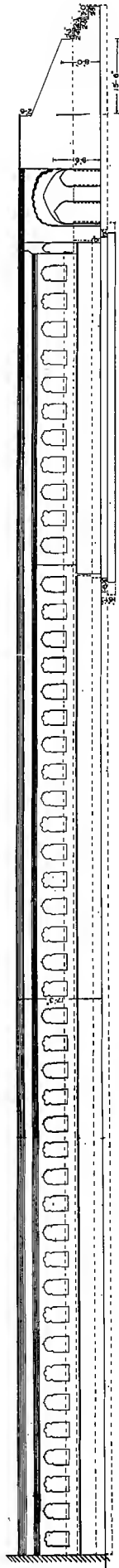
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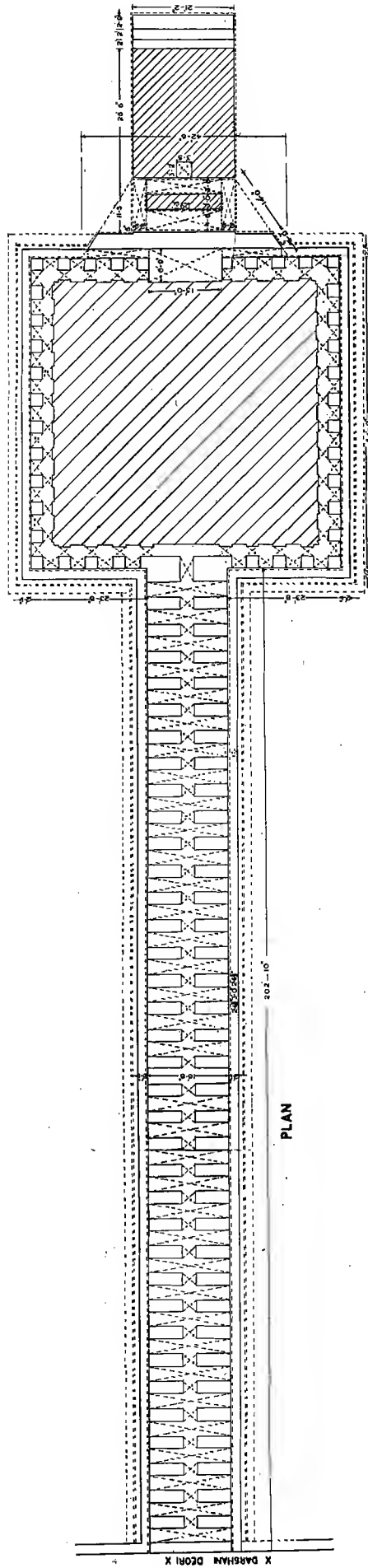
ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

PLINTH PLAN OF GOLDEN TEMPLE AND ITS APPROACH BRIDGE

SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"



SIDE ELEVATION



PLAN

Fig. A : Ground Plan and side elevation of the causeway.

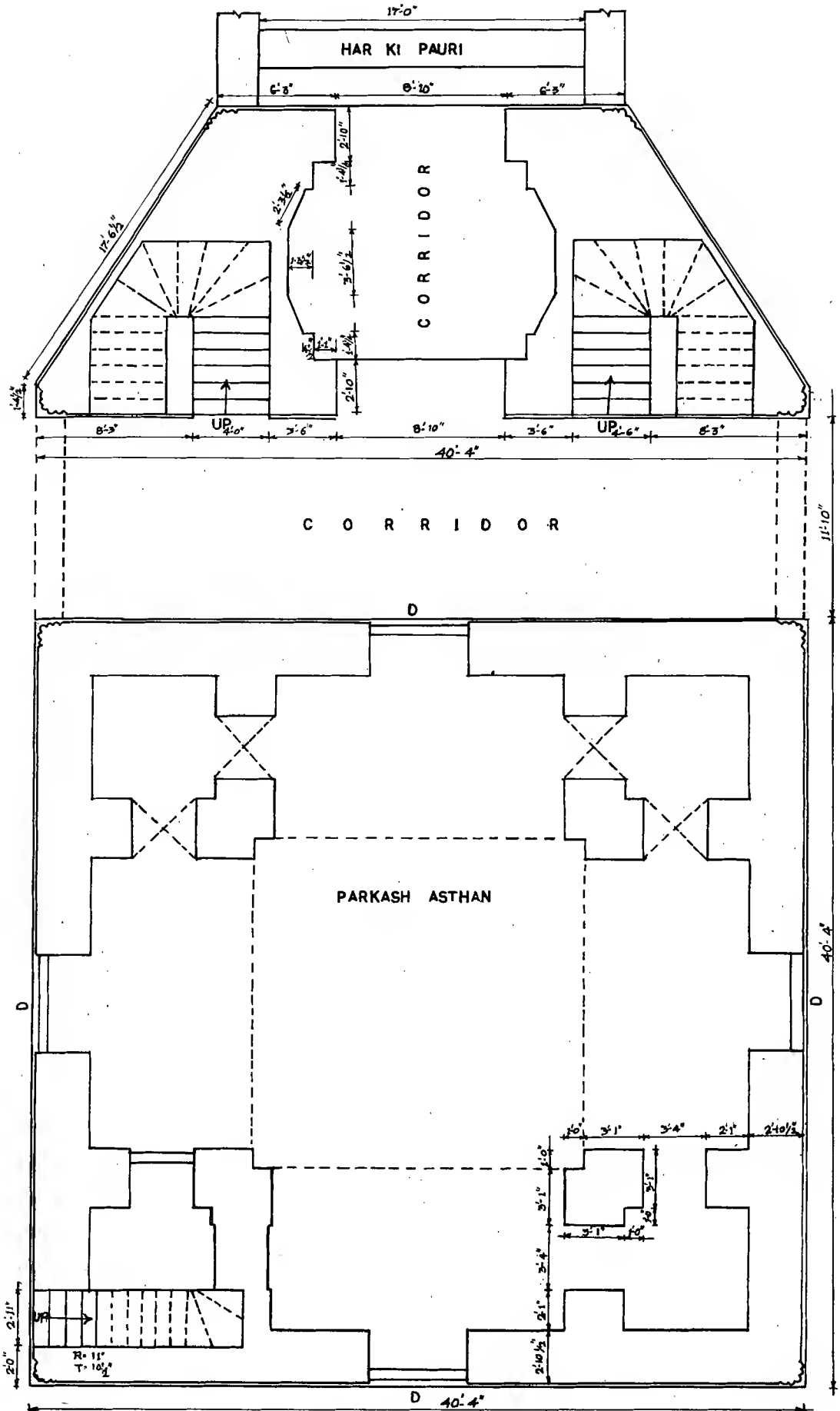


Fig. B : Ground Plan of the Golden Temple.

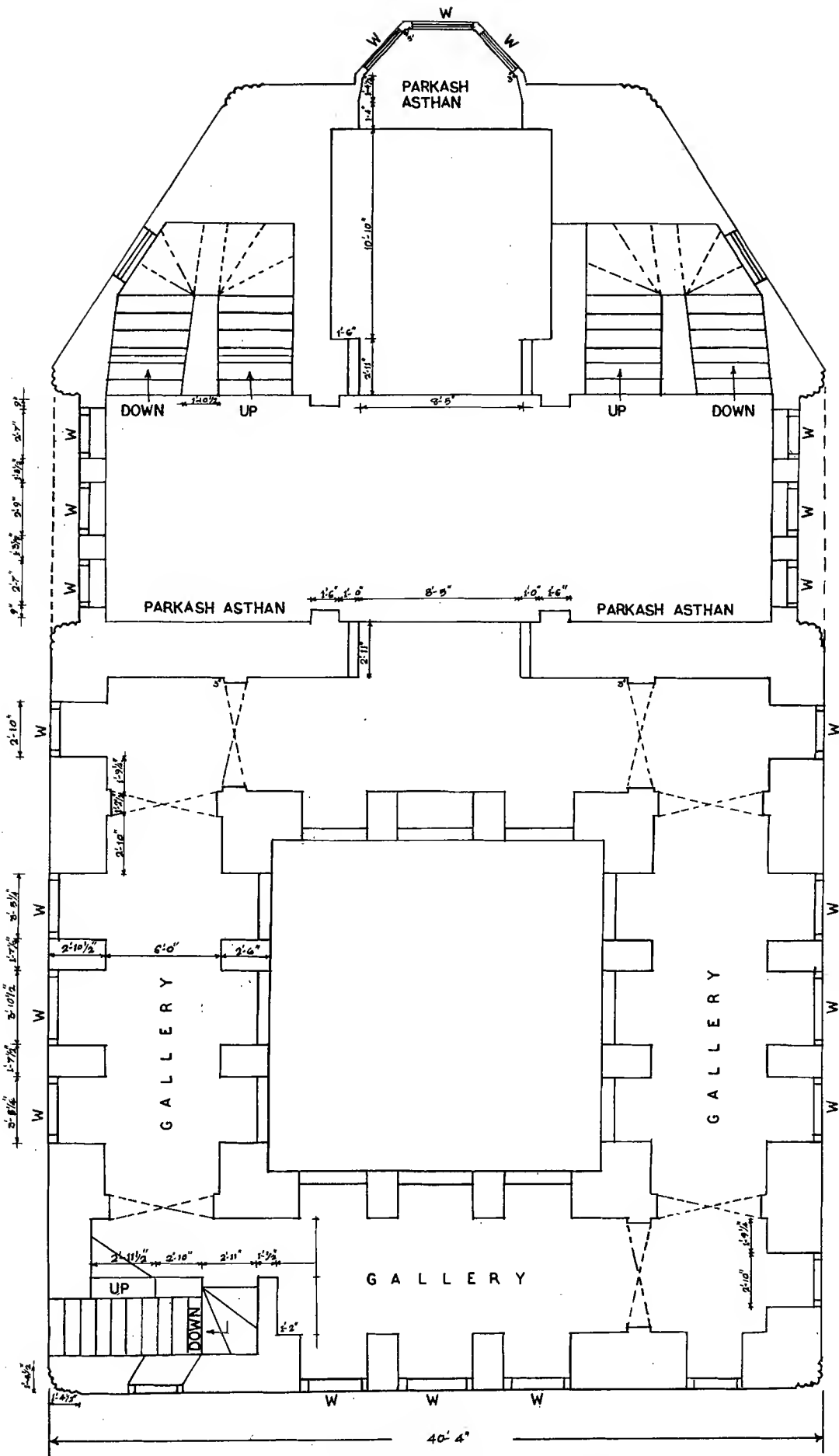


Fig. C : Plan of the first floor of the Golden Temple.

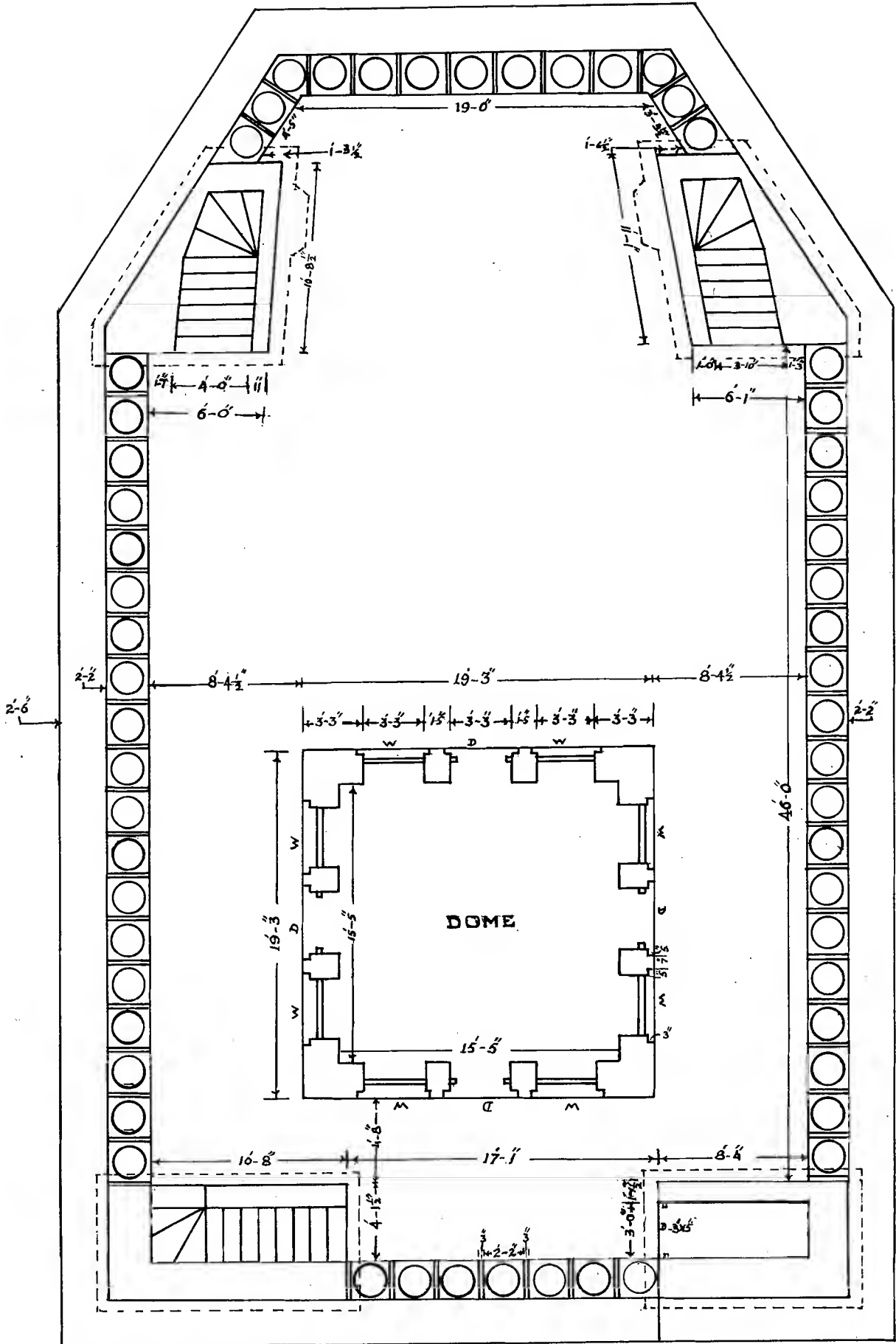


Fig. D : Plan of the second floor of the Golden Temple.

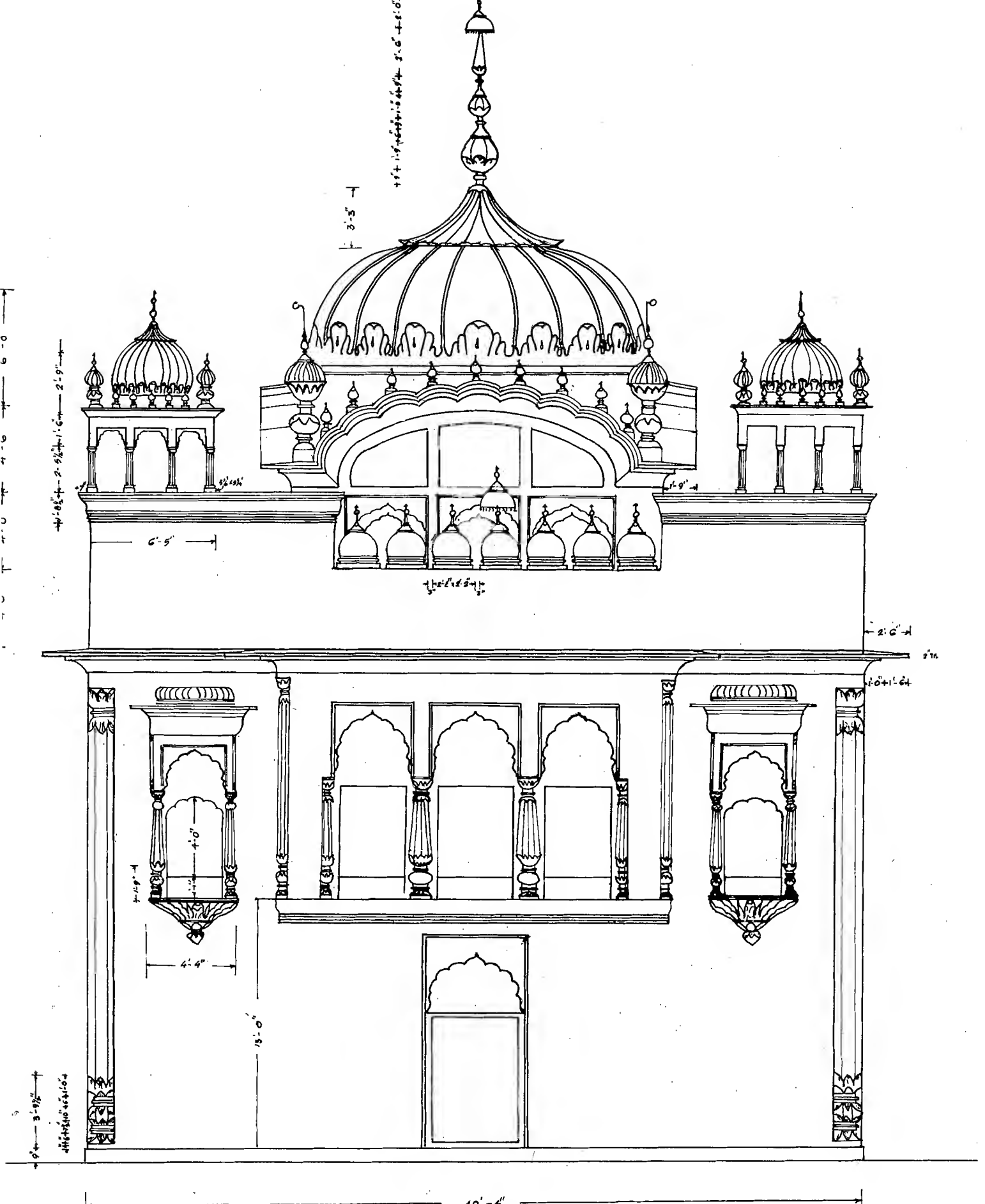


Fig. E : Front elevation of the Golden Temple.

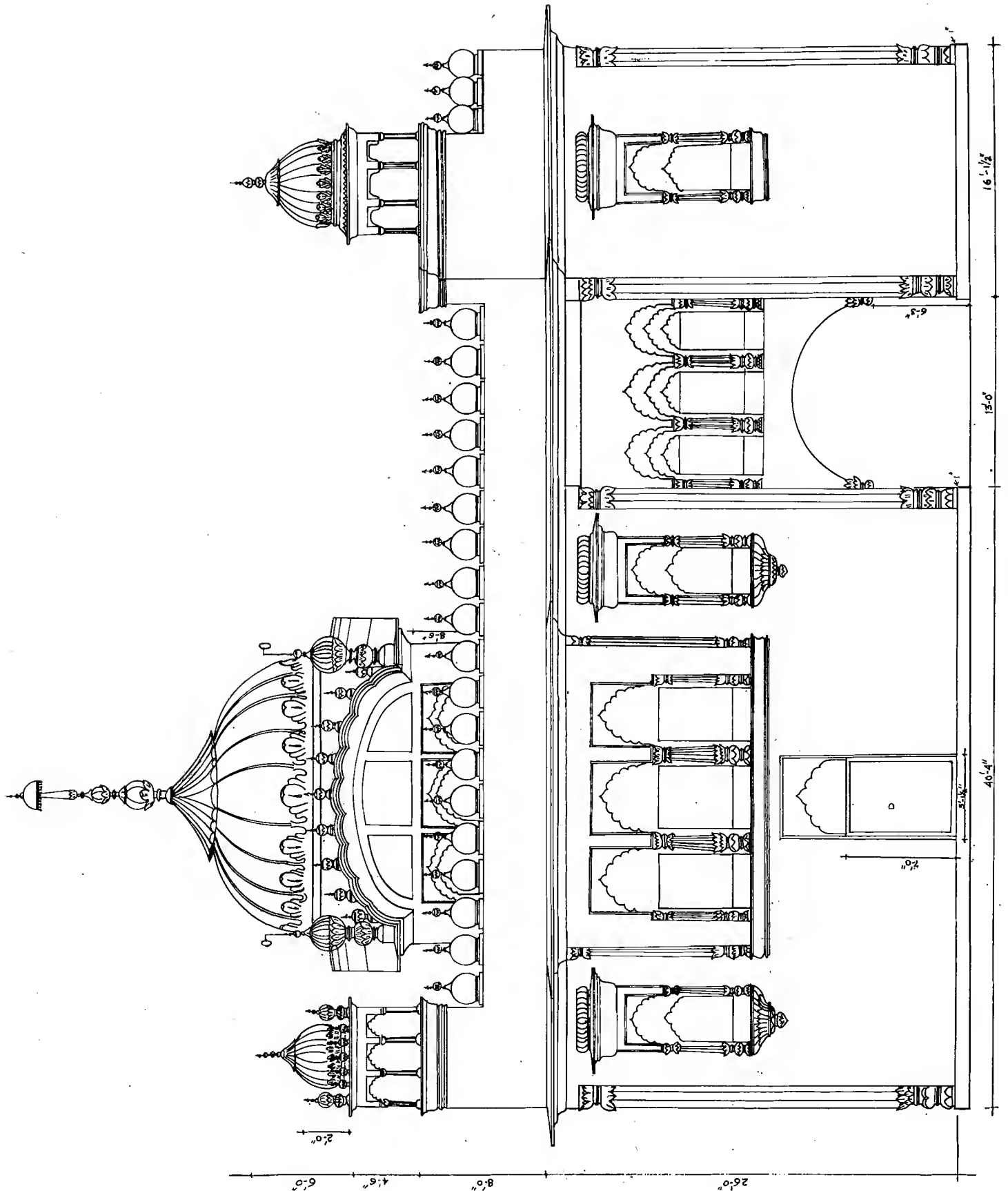


Fig. F : Side elevation of the Golden Temple.

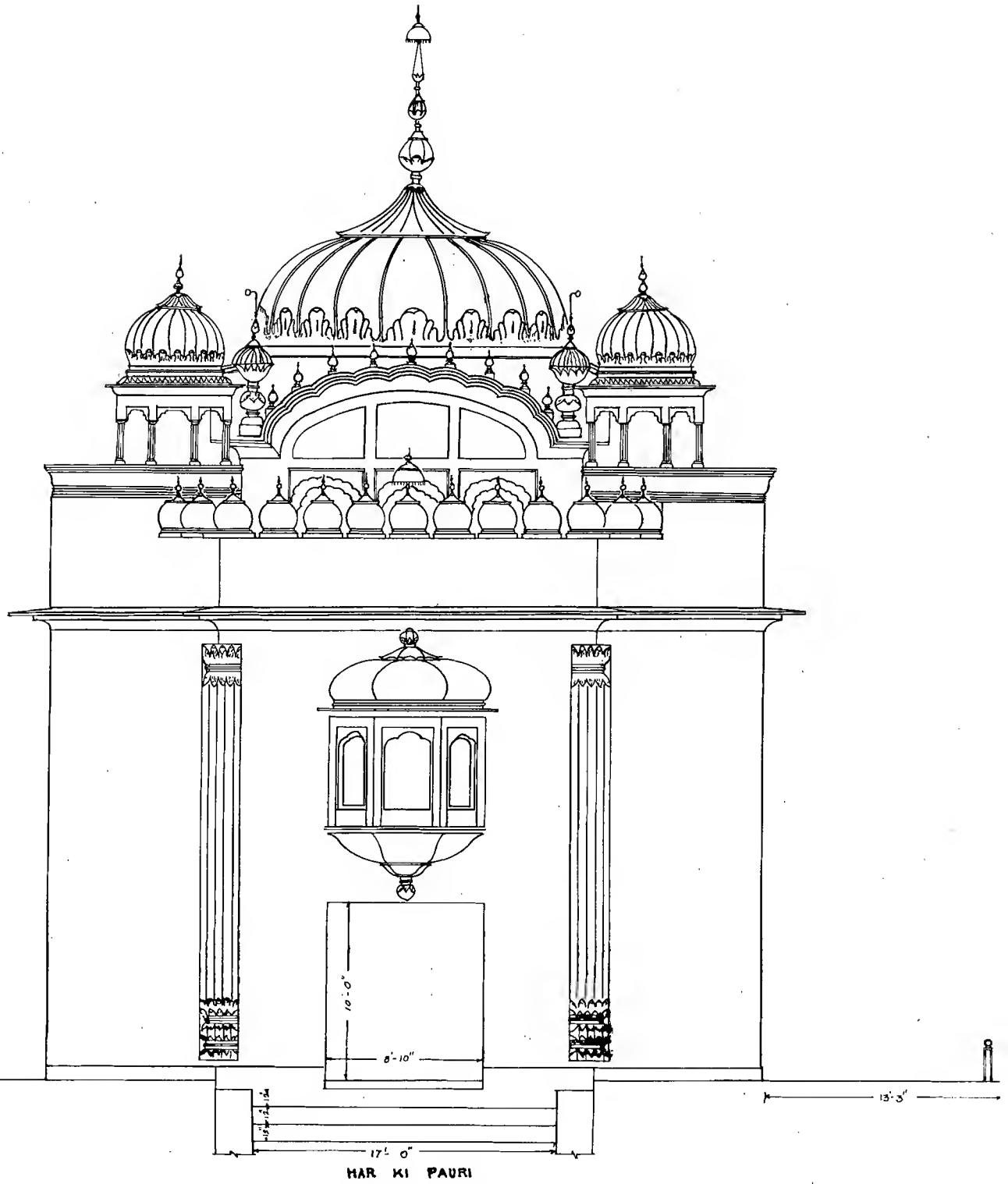


Fig. G : Back elevation (eastern side) of the Golden Temple.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS OF THE GOLDEN TEMPLE BY EUROPEAN SCHOLARS

1845

HUGEL, BARON CHARLES

Travels in Cashmere and the Punjab (London, 1845)

“For the first time since the foundation of their religion, the Sikhs found themselves strong enough to have a public assembly, Sarbat Khalsa, in Amritsar. This place, the ancient Chak, was of great importance in their estimation; for it was there that the fourth of their Gurus, Ram Das, constructed that celebrated tank in 1521, which he called Amrit Saras, or the Spring of Immortality, because they who bathed in its waters were cleansed from their sins. Thence was derived the name of the city Amritsar.

. . . . Ahmad Shah then marched towards Amritsar, ordered the temple of Harmander (Hari), which stood in the centre of the sacred tank, to be blown up with gunpowder, the water to be choked up with sand and stones, and rendered unclean by throwing in the blood and carcasses of cows (a profanation even more terrible, according to the maxims of the Sikh faith, than in the estimation of the Brahmins themselves); and finally, appointing Kabuli Mal, a Brahmin from Kabul, his deputy in Lahore, he returned at the end of the year 1762 to Kandhar.

. . . . Amritsar is a larger city than Lahore. The wealth of the whole Panjab seems collected in it, and the great merchants have made it their abode. Under the Mohammedans it was an unimportant place called Chak. It became the holy city of the Sikhs, when their fourth Guru Ram Das, dug a large tank, or *tulao*, here in the year 1581, which he called Amrita Saras, or the Spring of Immortality. It was also a place of pilgrimage for all the Hindus, and called Ramdaspur and Amritsar. But it was only in the latter half of the past century that it acquired importance by the

events which occurred in its neighbourhood. Places of pilgrimage are so numerous in India, that they are only noticed by the government for the sake of the tax levied on each pilgrim; and here the assembled crowds being of the lowest classes, they had nothing from which any tax could be levied.

... The first general assembly had hardly broken up, ere Ahmed Shah appeared to take a bloody revenge on them. The Sikhs fled in all directions; and after encountering and slaughtering a great part of their number at Kos Rahira, he returned towards Amritsar. The temple of Harmander (Hari Mander, the temple of Hari or Vishnu) was blown up with gunpowder, the broad stones round the holy tank were torn up and flung into the water, which was choked up with masonry and rubbish; and not content with this profanation, they brought cows to the place, slaughtered them on the heaps of ruins, sprinkled the stones with their blood and flung their entrails about.

Ahmed Shah had not reached the Atok before a second Gurmatta was held in Amritsar, where the profanation of this sacred spot animated all the spectators to deeds which brought about, perhaps sooner than might otherwise have happened, the downfall of Mohammedan power in the north of India. At the same time the Sikhs began to cleanse their dishonoured tank, and (a rare example for Hindus) it was restored to greater splendour than ever.

Amritsar is the most bustling of all the cities of the Panjab; in every street the most beautiful productions of India are seen exhibited for sale; and it seemed to me, though the elephants moved on briskly, as though there was no end to the streets. At length, I arrived at the chief entrance to the temple, which is very unpretending, and surrounded by houses. Here I pulled off my shoes, and waited some time until Vigne had disengaged himself from his boots. I gave 125 rupees to Juni Lal for distribution in the temple.

The *Tulao*, or pool, struck me with surprise. It is about 150 paces square, and has a large body of water, which to all appearance is supplied by a natural artesian well. There is no sign of the spring to be seen. It is surrounded by a pavement about 20 to 25 paces in breadth. Round this square are some of the most considerable houses of the city, and some buildings, belonging to the temple, the whole being inclosed by gates; although one can look very conveniently from the windows of the houses into this inclosed space, and some of the doors even open into it. There are several stone steps by which the bathers descend into the water, which is as clear as a mirror, a rare occurrence in such places in India. I went entirely round the basin. In the midst of the *Tulao* stands the temple of Hari Mander, built on an island, and reached by a bridge on the west side. The holiest spot for bathing is on the east side, as they step out of this temple; but before the pilgrim is allowed to bathe there, he must have performed his ablution in another part of the pool. Opposite to this revered place stand some small buildings, in which Gurus and Fakirs are seated;

another which is untenanted is shown as the place where Guru Ram Das, the excavator of this bath of immortality, passed his whole life.

All Indian temples have something in them which appeals forcibly to the imagination, and the Hari Mander is particularly mysterious and romantic in its character. It is surmounted by a golden roof, very romantic in its character. It is surmounted by a golden roof, very beautifully and skillfully contrived, and is inlaid with marble, a large door of gold opening into the temple, which is surrounded with little vestibules, the ceilings being supported by richly ornamented pillars. Before the entrance to the bridge are two large banners of red; on one is written, "Wah! Guruji-ke fatih" in white letters and on the other, the name of Ram Das. These banners are from thirty to forty ells long, and are stretched on masts and confined with iron chains. Having crossed the bank I entered within the temple.

I took the paved way round the temple on the little island. On the sacred bathing place was a small vestibule, in which I observed workmen employed in ornamenting it with a *pietra dura* floor. The marble walls were smeared with glaring colours representing flowers."

1854

FRENCH, C.J.

Journal of a tour in upper Hindustan (Agra, 1854)

"Between 3 and 4 P.M. today half a dozen of us proceeded to the city, to see the "Pool of Immortality" and the "golden temple." After winding through several streets, we were brought to a small square surrounded by houses, in front of which stood the porch, where my companions and I were obliged to take off our shoes previous to advancing further. This compliance with the customs of the place, we were made to understand before leaving camp, nor did we hesitate to conform to it, else our curiosity would not have been gratified, nor we permitted to advance further into this sacred retreat. We descended a few steps, which brought us to a broad pavement constructed of burnt bricks, surrounding a basin of water, which is about 125 or 130 paces square. In the centre of this basin, stood the temple de-Grunth or book of laws on a rich cushion, placed under a small arch that suspended a string of bells arranged round a golden or brazen ball. The book of laws carefully fanned with a bushy tail of the Tibet cow, set in a fine silver handle, that served to keep off the disagreeable obtrusiveness of the flies. The Akalee who performed this office, seemed

to be the high priest, or one of the body who compose the higher section of the Sikh priesthood. This venerable old man was, at the same time, engaged in delivering occasional lectures to a small congregation that surrounded him, while some went to drink of the "immortal pool" to which a flight of steps descended from the bank of the temple. This building is not very lofty and evinces little architectural taste and beauty. It however assumes a degree of magnificence, from its dazzling splendour at a sudden and first view, but is denuded of much of this attraction, when the eye attempts a closer scrutiny. Its interior has a few attractive features in the form of flowers in high relief which are carved out of blocks of marble, something after the style adopted in the Taj Mehal at Agra, but not even remotely approaching the elegance displayed in that costly and superb edifice.

The town of Umritsar takes its name from this cistern, which in Sanskrit is said to denote "the fountain of nectar," from the words 'umrit' and 'saras'. The temple was, I believe, founded by Gooroo Govind Singh and is of some antiquity in the Sikh calendar."

1878

WAKEFIELD, W.

Our Life and Travels in India (Lahore, 1878)

"It originated when, in the year 1581. Ram Das, their fourth Guru or spiritual leader, converted an ancient pool, in what was then a little village and his birthplace, into a splendid tank, and called it 'Umritsur'—the fount of immortality; 'The spring of nectar', on a little island in the tank he erected a marble shrine, and to this spot the followers of the new Sikh religion and their converts came every year.....

The Golden Temple of Umritsar now stands on the spot once occupied by the shrine of Ram Das, which was destroyed during invasion of the terrible Ahmed Shah of Cabul. It is a marble structure square, with dome and minarets; and although considered by some to be a splendid example of the modern temple architecture of India, is by many judges turned a hybrid mixture of an idol house and a mosque. Its roof is plated with the gilded metal from which it derives its name; and its walls are dedicated to the god Vishnu, and is crowded with priests, the whole establishment being mentioned from rich lands secured to it in former days, with which our Government has not interfered."

1883

DAVID ROSS

The Land of The Five Rivers and Sindh (Lahore, 1883)

“AMRITSAR”

“Derives its name from the Sanskrit words, a, not; *mrit*, death; *sar*, fountain—signifying the “fountain of immortality;” the name was limited at first to the *talao* or reservoir which Ram Das, the fourth *Guru*, made here in 1574, in the centre of which the Golden Temple now stands. Amritsar is a walled city, with thirteen gates, and contains 143,000 inhabitants—Sikhs, Hindus, and Muhammadans. It was formerly fortified, but the bastions have been dismantled and removed, and the ditch to the north and north-west has been filled up. Between the railway and the city is the fort of Govindgarh, built by Ranjit Singh in 1809, a small and somewhat old-fashioned stronghold surrounded by a deep ditch. The English station is small, but the houses are prettily situated. The cantonments generally contain only a few companies of English and native infantry. There is always one battery of artillery in the fort.

The chief sights in Amritsar, which is distant a five minutes drive from the railway station are the Town-hall with portraits of Cooper, Mr. Herbert Edwardes, and Khan Muhammad Shah Khan Bahadur, the Hall Bazaar with its two mosques (built by Shaikh Khair-ud-din and Main Muhammad Jan Khan Bahadur), the Government school, the Santokhsar Tank (*Santosh* means consolation), the new city gardens, the Durbar or Sikh Temple and its surroundings, and the mission school. The Durbar was constructed by Ram Das, the fourth *Guru*, in 1574, and is the centre of attraction and veneration to all Sikhs. It is a small marble temple roofed with sheets of copper, gilt by order of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1802, who spent large sums upon it. Since that time it has been called The Golden. Many of the inlaid decorations were brought by the Sikhs from the tomb of Jehangir at Shahdara near Lahore, and other Muhammadan tombs. It is situated in the middle of a large quadrangular *talao* or tank. A marble paved border nearly surrounds the tank, and a causeway of marble leads to the temple. Visitors must take off their shoes before descending the steps. They should remember that the marble is always cold and wet in the morning, and warm in the afternoon and evening; covers for the feet are kept.

There are many objects of interest in the temple and its precincts. The palace (*Bhunga*) of the *Akalis*, or famous warrior priests, stands at the head of the quadrangle facing the gateway. The pavement in front is very handsome. Here is the baptistry of the Sikhs. In the palace are shown the swords of the *Gurus*, and their

other weapons; some of the later teachers of the sect were better as soldiers than as preachers. The place of rest at night for the *Granth*, the Scripture of the Sikhs, is here also; it is kept in the temple during the day. The *Granth* is preserved with great care, but is little read or expounded. Singers and instrumentalists keep up a kind of irregular service before it all day. The people bring their votive offerings and cast them on the sheet in front of the book. Flowers that have lain under the holy volume are given in return. Popular devotion seems to take the form of worship of the temple and the book. All Sikhs rest their foreheads on the ground, and kiss its threshold before the building. Everything connected with the *Granth* and the temple is held in veneration: they are spoken of as *Granth Sahib* and *Durbar Sahib*. The very gates of the city are kissed by true Sikhs. There are five or six hundred Akalis attached to the temple.

On the pavement round it are many curious sights; combmakers plying their trade, sellers of steel ornaments, writers of Sikh books, *Fakirs*, Hindu bathers, etc. The two minarets on the east side of the temple tank are worth a visit. They are easy to climb, and the view from the top of the city and temple and surrounding country is very fine.

. . . . Amritsar four hundred years ago was a small village, and was called *Chak*. Ram Das, the fourth Sikh Guru, founded a small temple or series of temples round the tank, which he dug out, and called the place Ram Daspur. This was in the reign of Akbar, A.D. 1574. The present city grew around this original nucleus. Arjan, the son of Ram Das, made it the metropolis of the Sikhs and called it Amritsar. In the time of the Sikh commonwealth it saw many reverses. The city was then a collection of forts surrounded by the houses of the dependants of the owners. About the year 1710, the Sikhs overran the Sirhind district and threatened Delhi, but they were defeated by the Muhammadan Power, and did not establish their empire till the decline of the Mughals, when they took Lahore, in 1758. In 1762 Timur, the son of Ahmed Shah, destroyed the best of the houses and threw the ruins into the tank. The temple was rebuilt and the tank cleansed, but they were desecrated by Ahmed Shah himself, who destroyed the newly-built temple, and slaughtered cows on the site. But on his final departure, the polluted spot was purified, and Muhammadan mosques were washed with the blood of swine. The victories of Ranjit Singh enabled him to do much towards beautifying the temple and the city. Amongst the Sikh gentry it is still regarded as an act of virtue to contribute something to the adornment of the *Durbar*. The coloured marble pavement at present surrounds only a little more than one half of the tank; the work of completing it is being done by various *Rajas*, *Sardars*, and men of money and position. Each Sikh Raja counts it a point of honour to own a *bhunga* on the border of the temple.

. . . . Amritsar is the holy city of the Sikhs, in the same way as Benares is that of the Hindus, Mecca that of the Muhammadans, or Jerusalem of the Jews and Christians; but not only does this sacred character attach itself to the city, it extends also

to the surrounding country, which is called the *Manjha*, or heart of the Sikh commonwealth; it has been the scene of the most celebrated and important events in their short but stirring history."

1884

H.H. COLE. MAJOR

Preservation of National Monuments, Golden Temple at Amritsar, Punjab
(Lahore, 1884)

Amritsar was founded in A.D. 1574 around a sacred tank from which the city takes its name "Pool of Immortality". The site granted by the Emperor Akbar to Ram Dass, the Guru of the Sikhs, became covered with temples and huts and was at first named Ramdaspur, from the founder. He made Amritsar the proper seat of his followers, the centre which should attract their worldly longings for a material bond of union and the obscure hamlet, with its little pool (General Cunningham tells me there was a village named "Chak" on the site) has grown into a populous city and the great place of pilgrimage of the Sikh people. In A.D. 1756 Prince Timur, the son of Ahmed Shah Durani, expelled the Sikhs from Amritsar, demolished the buildings, and filled the sacred reservoir with the ruins.

In A.D. 1762, the army of the Khalsa assembled at Amritsar, the faithful performed their ablutions in the restored Pool, and the first dict, or Gurumutta, was held. The same year Ahmed Shah destroyed the renewed temples and polluted the tank with the blood of cows. In A.D. 1764, the Sikhs became Masters of Lahore, the chiefs again assembled at Amritsar, proclaimed their own sway and rebuilt the temples.

In A.D. 1802 as it now exists, is about 500 feet square, and fed by the old Hasli Canal. The Golden Temple stands on a platform in the centre, and is approached by a pier, at the end of which is the Darshani Door, or "Gate of Sights". The Tank is surrounded by bungalows, i.e. dwellings for visitors and pilgrims. To the east is a garden with several fountains, called the Guru-ka-Bagh made in A.D. 1588, and due south of this the Kaulsar Tank, 410 feet by 170 feet. Further east stands the tomb of Baba Atal (built in A.D. 1628). The whole place is full of interest, although so comparatively modern in repairing the Golden Temple, Ranjit Singh used many of the inlaid decorations and marbles carried away from the tomb of Jahangir and other Muhammadan monuments at Lahore. It is stated in the *official list of buildings of interest published by the Punjab Government in 1875* that the design of the

temple repaired by Ranjit Singh was borrowed from the shrine of the Muhammadan Saint Mian Mir, near Lahore (1635 A.D.).

At the request of Sir Robert Egerton, the late Lieutenant Governor, I had a careful survey made of the Tank and buildings. It will therefore be more fitting to postpone a detailed description. The architecture is an adaptation of Muhammadan styles, flavoured with a good deal that is of Hindu tradition. Birds and animals are introduced in the marble mosaics, and mythological scenes are depicted in the paintings of the interiors. A peculiar flatness is of frequent use in the facades and seems to have been universal in Sikh buildings and tombs.

The doors of the Darshani Gate are of shisham wood, the front overlaid silver, the back inlaid with ivory. The silver plated front is ornamented with panels only. The back arranged in square and rectangular panels with geometric and floral designs. In which are introduced birds, lions, tigers, and deer. Some of the ivory inlay is coloured green and red, the effect being extremely harmonious.

In January 1881, when I first visited Amritsar, I noticed the mosaics to be suffering from dirt and neglect, and recommended their being periodically cleaned and kept from cracking by careful oiling.

The earliest specimen of oriental marquetry that I know occurs in the famous Somnath Gates, now in the Agra Fort. The elaborate Saracenic patterns on them prove that even if the wood frames were originally in the Somnath Temple, they must have been re-carved by Mahmud of Ghazni. They date at all events, from the early part of the eleven century, and having been recently cleaned are discovered to be really of sandalwood.

Mr. Fergusson writes: The carved ornaments on them are so similar to those found at Cairo in the Mosque of Ebn Touloun (A.D. 885) and other buildings of that age, as not only to prove they are of the same date, but also to show how similar were the modes of decoration at these two extremities of the Moslem Empire at the time of their execution.

The wooden mimbar, or Pulpit, in the mosque of Qous, Cairo (twelfth century A.D.) and the marquetry in the Mehrab of the mosque of Nesfy Qeycoum, also at Cairo (fourteenth century A.D.) are inlaid with ivory the geometrical and floral patterns, which are most elaborate and beautiful resembling Indian work of the same class.

The doors of the mosque of Khazrete at Samarkhand (the building dates before 1405 A.D., when Tamerlane died) are of wood, inlaid with ivory, in patterns very Indian in design, and as we know Tamerlane to have been much struck with Indian architecture when he invaded India in A.D. 1398, and to have carried off Indian workmen from Delhi to Samarkhand, it is probable that examples of marquetry existed there before the fourteenth century.

The earliest existing specimens of Indian marquetry I know are Ahmedabad and Bijapur. The wooden canopy over Shah Alam's Tomb (A.D. 1475) at the former place being handsomely incrustated with mother-of-pearl. The doorways of the Ashar Mahal (A.D. 1580) at the latter place are inlaid with ivory. The canopy over Sheikh Salim Chisti's tomb (A.D. 1581) at Fatehpur Sikri is of wood, covered with tesserae of mother-of-pearl.

The doorways in the Amber palace near Jaipur (A.D. 1630) are of wood, variously ornamented with (i) Carved panels, (ii) Inlays of ivory; (iii) And small lozenges of ivory which are incrustated with what is known as Bombay inlaid work. Unfortunately these doors are much neglected and falling to ruin. The doors of the Bari Mahal (A.D. 1711) at Udaipur are of another specimen of marquetry, some being ornamented with small panels of wood overlaid with ivory, like the modern work done at Vizagapatam only in far better taste.

The Inlaid work of Bombay was imported from Shiraz and Persia, and is the least effective of any of the Indian wood inlays, being extremely minute and monotonous in design.

The Modern Hoshiarpur work resembles that in the Darshani Gate. It is a promising and rising art manufacture and could derive material for new patterns from the examples above quoted.

1885

HUNTER, W.W.

Imperial Gazetteer (Vol. I, London 1885)

“Amritsar contains no noteworthy relics of an early date, and the interest of its local annals begins with the rise of the Sikh power. The Guru or high priest, Angad, successor to Nanak founder of their sect, inhabited the village of Khadur, near the Beas, in the south of this district, where he died in 1552. Amar Das third Guru, lived at Govindwal in the same neighbourhood, and was succeeded on his death in 1574 by his son-in-law Ram Das, who became the fourth spiritual leader of the rising sect and died in 1581. Ram Das laid the foundations of the future city of Amritsar upon a site granted by the Emperor Akbar. He also excavated the holy tank from which the town derives its name of Amrita Saras or Pool of Immortality; and in its midst, on a small island, he began to erect a temple, the future

centre of Sikh devotion, Arjan the fifth Guru, son and successor of Ram Das completed the sacred building and lived to see the growth of a flourishing town around the holy site."

In 1761 Ahmedshah, "on his homeward march he destroyed the town of Amritsar, blew up the temple with gunpowder, filled in the sacred tank with mud, and defiled the holy place by the slaughter of cows." Ranjit Singh seized Amritsar in 1802 from Bhangi Sardars.

The Maharaja spent large sums of money upon the great shrine, and roofed it with sheets of copper gilt, whence the building derives its popular name of the Golden Temple.

Near the centre lies the sacred tank from whose midst rises the Darbar Sahib, or great temple of the Sikh faith, the focus of the believer's aspirations. It stands upon a rectangular platform, connected with the land by a marble causeway, and consists of a square block surmounted by a gilded dome. Many of the inlaid decorations had been carried off by the Sikh marauders from the tomb of Jahangir and other Muhamadan monuments.

... The city contains several minor tanks and temples, besides a lofty column, known as the Baba Atal, built over the tomb of a son of Guru Hargovind.

1908

OMAN, J.C.

Cults, Customs and Superstitions of India (London, 1908)

"The fertile religious soil of India has been productive of many interesting creeds, amongst which that known as Sikhism (the religion of the Sikhs) certainly holds a very important and in many respects unique position. Its beginnings are coeval with the Reformation in Europe; it has passed through many and strikingly different stages, and has experienced many vicissitudes of fortune. The word Sikh—now so familiar to the British public—means a disciple and is the distinguishing name of the followers of a non-idolatrous religion or sect which first came into existence in the Punjab in the early part of the sixteenth century. Founded originally in Baba Nanak (A.D. 1469-1539), a Hindu of the Bedi Khatri caste, Sikhism, though enduring from time to time much persecution at the hands of the Muhamadan rulers of the country (not solely on account of its religious professions), grew and

developed gradually under the leadership of nine spiritual successors of the founder of the sect; these nine, with Baba Nanak himself, being the *ten Gurus* or prophets of the Sikhs. In connection with the lives of the Gurus many miraculous legends of an extravagant character have been recorded, and are devoutly believed by the Sikhs generally, though some of the better-educated members of the sect seem disposed to regard them as purely mythical. However, the story of the gurus is not entirely legendary, but enshrines many striking and romantic situations, many extremely pathetic and tragic incidents which have an undoubtedly historical basis, and are often in the thoughts and on the lips of their faithful followers.

Baba Nanak's religious teaching, which was of a dreamy, philosophical character, differs remarkably from that of the modern Sikhs, who follow the precepts of Govind Singh (A.D. 1675-1708), the tenth and last of *guru*; for, under the pressure of political circumstances, Govind converted the Sikhs into a militant sect aggressively hostile to Muhammadanism.

The most sacred book of the Sikhs, the authoritative scripture of the sect, known as the *Adi-Granth*, is a large volume of mystical rhapsodies, often beautiful but more often incomprehensible, compiled, from the writings of Nanak and other mystics, by the fifth guru, Arjan (A.D. 1581-1606).

As to the tenets of Sikhism it may be sufficient to note here that this creed upholds the Hindu belief in reincarnations, with the important modification that by whole-hearted, unquestioning devotion to the guru the disciple may escape the otherwise inevitably long (almost interminable) succession of re-births *under the law of Karma*, and may thus attain salvation immediately after his present life.

. . . . Of all the sacred places of the Sikhs the Golden Temple, known amongst the people as the *Darbar Sahib*, is the most important. To be seen to advantage, this temple should be visited on the occasion of the *Diwali* festival, when the fane and its surroundings are brilliantly illuminated with thousands upon thousands of those little terracotta lamps, known in India as *cheraghs*.

. . . . Passing through the very narrow and crowded streets of the city, we suddenly entered a large open space, bounded by stately buildings, and there before us lay a fine sheet of water, from the centre of which rose like a fairy island the beautiful Sikh temple with its marble walls and gilded cupolas. A broad walk, for the greater portion paved with marble, runs along the four sides of the spacious tank in which it stands. A wide causeway of cut stone, also paved with marble, joins the north side of the temple to the land. The lower portion of the building is decorated with the handsome inlaid work so common in India. The dome and cupolas, and the major part of the upper portion of the building, are covered over with sheet copper, richly gilded; hence the name "Golden Temple" usually applied to it by Europeans. Viewed from the terrace on the east side of the artificial lake, or, better still, from an elevated position like the lofty tower known as the Baba Atal, the temple with its

surroundings forms a picture both unique and beautiful. According to Professor Sir Monier Williams, it may be said to rank next to the Taj at Agra as one of the most striking sights in India; while Dr. Fergusson considered this temple "as splendid an example of its class (of nineteenth-century temples) as can be found in India"; though he did not comment either its outline or its details the building, which combines in itself characteristics of both Hindu and Muhammadan styles of architecture, is not imposing in its dimensions; the dome, too, is low and squat; but the material of the structure is marble, the finish elaborate, and, taken as a whole and in connection with its surroundings, the Golden Temple is a decidedly attractive and pleasing object.

When our little party arrived at the temple, about an hour before sunset, the scene was extremely picturesque and animated. A stream of human beings was setting steadily towards the central building, and the crowd was every minute getting more and more dense. Looking down from the platform at the base of the new clock-tower.....

We entered the inner room or sanctuary, a vaulted chamber of very moderate dimensions, with a richly ornamented ceiling. In the centre of it was a heavy canopy or baldaquin of cloth of gold, supported on four silver posts. Under this was the sacred book of the Sikhs, the *Adi-Granth*, covered over with costly brocade, and before the volume, facing the main entrance, sat a *Granthi*, one of the principal priests of the temple. Round about were several *Pujaris* or lesser priests. On one side squatted three or four musicians, who, while we stood there, were playing on stringed instruments (*sitars* and *sarangis*), with the accompaniment of the *tabla* or drum, the well-known air of "Taza ba Taza," the ever popular song of Hafiz, breathing of love and wine.

There was no idol nor graven image in the shrine. The only object of veneration was the Book. We stood for a few minutes to watch the scene. Thousands had come from distant places to pay their respects and perform devotions at the temple on this important occasion. They struggled, a few at a time, into the chamber where the sacred volume lay, and made their offerings of money, sweets or flowers; receiving back from the hands of the priest some trifle—perhaps a crushed and broken flower taken from the heaps before him.

Observing our presence in the temple, one of the priests came forward and began directing our attention to various points of interest in the architecture of the place. He also handed us a couple of lumps of sugar-candy, and some flowers. I ventured at first to decline these presents; but he pressed them upon us so courteously that we were obliged to accept them. A visit to the upper floor of the building and to the roof well repaid us for the slight trouble of ascending a well-built staircase. The prospect from the windows was strikingly beautiful and interesting. The bright *water of immortality* (for such it is to the Sikhs) reflecting the image of the Golden

Temple, with the surrounding structures, and disturbed only by a few devout bathers near the shrines, lent a peculiar charm to the view, and tempted us to linger undisturbed for many minutes in the quiet upper storeys of the building. On one side, towards the causeway, the *Akal Bunga*, the stately palace of the *Akalis*, with its gilded dome and towering flagstaffs, made a fine object; on another, the palace of a Sikh Sirdar with its lofty minarets attracted the eye; and a little way off the gigantic tower, surmounted by a gilt cupola, which covers the remains of *Baba Atal*, gave additional beauty to an unusually striking panorama.

With the site of the temple, and more particularly with the lake, are connected legends, which date back to pre-historic times, and others which enshrine the story of miraculous events of not more than three or four centuries ago; while historical recollection of bloody martyrdoms and proud triumphs are associated with various spots in the immediate neighbourhood of this stately shrine. The sacred pool itself which lay below us, excavated by Guru Ram Das in 1574, has known many vicissitudes. More than once has it been filled up by the Muhammadans, and in 1762 it was desecrated by Ahmed Shah, who caused slaughtered cows to be thrown into the holy water. But this sacrilege was amply avenged in later years, when "numerous mosques were demolished, and Afghans in chains were made to wash the foundations with the blood of hogs. The temple which now stands in the centre of the quadrangular tank owes its gilding to the piety or superstition of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (A.D. 1780-1839), who, in his day of power, despoiled many of the finest Muhammadan tombs in Lahore and its neighbourhood, to embellish the chief temple of the sect to which he belonged; an act of vandalism not yet forgotten by the Punjab Muslims, to whom the Darbar Sahib is a standing eyesore to this day.

While we were at the temple, preparations for the illumination were being vigorously pushed on. The *cheraghs* were being arranged as closely as possible, along all the principal lines of the architecture. On the roof itself, these little lamps were screened on the outer side by a row of thin glass flasks containing water, variously coloured to produce the effect of polychromatic lights, and well indeed, as we afterwards saw, was the desired result secured by this very simple device.

The return through the closely packed crowd was only a repetition of our progress to the temple, and was accomplished without any *contretemps*. Near the clock-tower we found that the authorities (municipal or other) had placed several rows of seats for European spectators of the illumination. Here we settled ourselves down to watch the gradual lighting up of the temple and its surroundings. In an open space just behind us, a band of musicians—the town-band, I suppose—were treating us to popular English airs. As the dusk of evening approached, the appearance in quick succession, on different parts of the temple, around the boundaries of the tank and on the adjacent buildings, of bright points of fire, each point faithfully reproduced in the bosom of the tranquil lake, told us that the *cheraghs* were being deftly lighted by many practised hands. Silently and rapidly line after line of fire

flashed into existence, revealing to our admiring eyes the gemmed outlines of a veritable fairy city. When the buildings had all been lighted up, we were treated to a brilliant display of fireworks on three sides of the tank, the effect of the whole, as a display of light and colour, being most striking. . . .

. . . . The temple itself is open on all four sides, a fact which has been interpreted to indicate "that God may be worshipped from every side," while at the same time "people of every creed can enter and hear the praises of God that are always sung there." On the side farthest away from the causeway a flight of steps, known as Harkipouri, leads into the tank. To bathe and drink water at these steps is a meritorious act. Here caste distinction are supposed to disappear in partaking of the water of immortality; here too important oaths are often solemnly, if secretly, ratified. When I entered the sanctuary itself a *Granthi* and several attendants were seated near the Adi-Granth, which, covered over with a handsome cloth, lay on a small stand, a few inches above the floor. It was the object of special adoration, and was being fanned the whole time, as Hindu idols and great chiefs always are on ceremonial or state occasions. So sacred is the Granth held by the Sikhs, that the rich and ignorant amongst them consider it meritorious even to have it read for them, from beginning to end, and delegate the duty to a priest, who duly performs it for a trifling consideration—four or five rupees and a suit of clothes. Sometimes this ceremony, known as *pat*, is performed for the benefit of a dead person at the expense of his surviving relatives. Near the Granth in the Golden Temple, four or five musicians were playing on their instruments, and occasionally a song or hymn was set up, filling the vaulted chamber with a loud but no unpleasant sound. The numerous worshippers, mostly women of the middle class, many of them Hindus not properly belonging to the Sikh sect, performed their devotions by peregrinating the corridor which surrounds the central chamber three, five, or seven times, and then laying some small offering before the *book*. This circumambulation, known as *pradakshina*, is a common feature of Hindu worship throughout India. As on the occasion of my previous visit the chief priest's duty seemed limited to receiving the offering and making a trifling return in the shape of a flower or two. . . .

. . . . Hardly less interesting than the Darbar Sahib are its surroundings; for on the four sides of the tank are various places and objects which cannot fail to attract the visitor's attention. Chief amongst these is a building known as Akal Bunga, which stands facing the principal entrance, by the causeway, to the temple. Within this edifice I was shown the chamber in which the Adi-Granth of the temple is placed for safe custody for four hours at night, and whence it is carried each day before dawn, with great state and ceremony, to the shrine. Here is the throne of the sixth *guru* of the sect (Har Govind, A.D. 1605-1638); here, amongst other weapons, are his two swords, symbolizing spiritual and temporal sovereignty; here, also, is the chief baptistry of the Sikhs.

The ceremony of Sikh baptism or receiving the *pahul*, is very simple. A little water drawn from the sacred tank is placed in a small vessel and sweetened with sugar. Five men sit round it, reciting prescribed prayers and stirring the water with a dagger or miniature sword. When the prayers have all been duly said, a little of the now—consecrated water is sprinkled over the neophyte's head and eyes, and he is then required to drink the remainder; after which he eats *Karah-parshad* with, I presume, the five Sikhs who have taken part in the initiatory rite. As might have been expected, the Sikhs claim that receiving the *pahul* is a ceremony of vital importance, having a mysterious regenerating effect upon the initiated, inducing a daring courage in the most timid hearts. At the Akal Bunga I learned that at the initiation of every man, whatever be his nationality, he is required to say he was born at Patna (which was the birthplace of Guru Govind Singh), that he is a resident of Aliwalia (where Govind Singh's home was), and the son of Govind Singh (the tenth and last guru of the *Sikhs*); it being intended that by these transparent and pointless misstatements should be indicated that all Sikhs have a common nationality and a common spiritual father.

In front of the Akal Bunga is an open space used for various purposes. Here on the Dasera festival goats are slaughtered, and here I myself witnessed, from the top of the fine gateway leading to the causeway, a rough-and-tumble, but on the whole good-humoured, scrimmage amidst pools of red-coloured water during the lively days of the annual Holi festival.

Leaving the Akal Bunga and walking on to the open space just referred to, I observed that seated on the marble slabs a Brahman was reading out of and interpreting one of the Hindu shastras, to a small knot of women and children. Walking round the margin of the tank, within the sacred precincts which I was not permitted to tread with shoes on my feet, I found artisans manufacturing and selling neat little wooden combs. Others were displaying for sale various articles made of iron, particularly the ornaments worn by Sikhs as distinguishing badges of the sect. Others, again, were laying down marble flags on the broad roadway beside the tank, visible signs, I presume, of the pious generosity of the followers of Guru Nanak and Govind Singh. Here a physician, with the least possible quantity of clothing on his person, was applying a plaster to the head of a squalling infant; there several persons were circumambulating a sacred plum-tree planted by some body personage; while one or two yogis, rubbed over with ashes, sat, seemingly rapt in contemplation, on the cold pavement. In one place a woman, seated behind a covered volume, was conversing with some members of her own sex. In another a *Granthi*, with a similar covered-up book before him, was carrying on confidential conversation with a middle-aged man, probably a shopkeeper. As I passed I caught the words, "It can be managed," uttered confidently by the possessor of the sacred book. On inquiring about these irregular teachers, male and female, clinging, as it were, to the outskirts of the temple, I learned that they were despicable wretches

who, under the garb of religion, lent themselves to the furtherance of the most immoral practices. Seated tranquilly behind the sacred volume of their faith, they arrange illicit meetings, for which I was told the purlieus of the temple afford only too great facilities. Although local circumstances may, in the case of the Golden Temple, favour the exercise of their calling by these shameless wretches, who make a disgraceful profit out of the frailties of others, the class to which they belong probably owes its origin and prosperity to the restrictions imposed upon social intercourse between the sexes in India.

My two visits already described had by no means exhausted the interest of the Darbar Sahib and its surroundings, that was quite clear to me; so, when the opportunity offered, I gave myself the pleasure of a quiet stroll round the tank, following, in fact, what is regarded as the "greater ambulatory," the lesser one being within the fane itself where the sacred Granth is adored. I was accompanied by some young Sikh gentlemen, whose special and local knowledge helped to enlighten my ignorance and make the promenade both agreeable and profitable. With them I sauntered along the four sides of the noble expanse of water, many passing incidents and objects of interest claiming my attention. Very soon I realized that heterogeneity was a marked characteristic of the environs of the Golden Temple, and I drew forth a note-book to set down details too numerous and disconnected to be trusted to the memory. From these jottings-by-the-way I select the following, as they provide particulars enough to enable the reader to form his own mind-picture of the environs of the famous temple.

Proceeding along the north side of the pool we encountered at one place a Brahman worshipping tiny images of Ganesh and Krishna; at another a representative of the same hereditary priesthood engaged in adoration of the sun. Noteworthy facts which gave me something to think about. A little further on we passed a school of small children receiving instruction in the rudiments of knowledge under a beautiful peopul-tree. At the north-east corner of the tank in the umbrageous shelter of a fine banyan-tree, we came upon a temple of Siva represented, as usual, by a lingam, which in this instance was about four inches high with a brass bell over it; the whole standing upon a substantial brick and marble platform at the foot of the spreading tree. Here my companions pointed out to me backs of certain *akharas* (Sikh monasteries), which I had visited on another day in their company.

Advancing along the eastern side of the tank we arrived at a spot known as *dukh bhanjane* (pain destroyer), where the most notable miracle of healing associated the water of immortality took place. Near this spot a lecturer was expatiating to a small knot of listeners upon the duties of life, quoting, while I stood there, the Christian scriptures in support of his teaching. Within a short distance we passed a little temple sacred to *Devi*, with the accompaniment of Granth Sahibs and a brass plat with a picture in relief of the famous miracle to which allusion has just been

made. Next came a *ghat* and then a Gurdwara of Guru Arjan, and after that a little kiosk with a gilt dome in perfect condition, but with a reed but alongside. Again we encountered Brahmans engaged in worship, *separately*, of course. One had before him a saligram and a picture of the temple of Badrinarain; while the other was adoring a saligram and a *tulasi* (holy basil) plant. The latter worshipper appeared quite at home in the precincts of the Sikh temple, for he blew sundry loud blasts by means of a conch, from which he managed to produce some three or four distinct notes.

Walking along the southern side of the tank we arrived at Shahid Bunga—a place of martyrdom, and the Sikhs have many such to point to—with its flagstaff surmounted by a spear-head and carrying a yellow flag. The Bunga commemorates the death of Shahid Dip Singh, and within was a picture of the martyr armed with sword and pistol, for the Sikh martyr did not die tamely, but fighting for his faith and its sacred shrine against the Muhammdans. Near by a Sikh artisan was busy making the iron emblems—miniature swords, quoits, and other articles—affected by his co-religionists, and within a few yards of him some eight men in a row were busy reading Granth Sahibs, perhaps vicariously, for men and women who could pay to have it done for the benefit of themselves or their ancestors.

At the south-west corner a number of craftsmen were hard at work making box-wood combs with enviable skill and wonderful clarity—others were selling photographs.

On the west side was established, with the object of acquiring merit, a *chabil* to supply visitors with drinking water, and beyond this spot were pandits and more pandits, and at the north-west corner a lame *sadhu*.

But the most interesting object on the western side was an inscription in two languages upon plates fixed one on either side of the handsome gateway, which stands at the head of the causeway leading to the temple. The inscription in English, which is on the left-hand side of the entrance, is as follows:

“It should be generally known that a wonderful event took place lately in the Golden Temple. This building was erected by the great Guru Ram Dass King of Kings and incarnation of Ram who giving blessings and receives worship from all creatures.’The following is an account of what occurred on the 30th of April 1877 at 4.30 a.m. about 400 persons according to ancient custom were praying in this Sri Durbar Sahib and listening to psalms whose music was almost drowned by the roar of thunder. Suddenly a flash of lightning fell from heaven and entered the holy place by the northern door close to the singers and musicians a ball of fire of about two seers in weight burst in the temple shining with dazzling and terrible brightness. Then immediately after shining before the

holy book it returned to the sky through the southern entrance and although it fell with such awful violence and so loud a report yet there was no injury caused to the Durbar Sahib or to human life. Therefore all who were assembled joined in ascribing this miracle to Ram Dass who dedicated this temple to Hari. We think it is also a sign of the great prosperity of the British rule also we are thankful to the Empress of India we pray to the creator of all things for a daily increase in their happy influence and for the destruction of all the enemies of her Imperial Majesty. The government inspector waited on the Comr. and informed him to this remarkable event. The following gentlemen viz. the Commissioner Rajah Surat Singh Sardar General Gulab Singh Bhagowalia Sardar Manal Singh Ramgharia and all the worshippers agreed—That money being collected by friends of the Golden Temple half should be given towards the support of the sacred edifice and half to pay for a dinner to the poor. Sufficient money was gathered to pay for seven readings of the Granth Sahib and to feed some thousands of poor people who all expressed their gratitude. This notice is also intended as a memorial of the Superintendence of Sardar Mangal Singh over the Sri Darbar Sahib of Hari and as a remembrance of the mircale of Guru Ram Dass and the prosperity of our rulers which we pray may last to the end of time B.K.”

The *globular* lightning referred to, which is a very rare phenomenon, naturally produced a deep impression upon those who witnessed it. How they came to estimate its weight at two seers (four pounds) is an insoluble mystery. However, the affirmation that Guru Ram Dass was an incarnation of the Supreme Being is certainly significant, and the rest of the inscription is at least deserving of note.

. . . . There is nothing quite like it anywhere else, but I could not help wishing that the incongruous modern clock-tower could be blotted out of the view.

A stroll through the Guru's Gardens close-by and a visit to the tomb of Baba Atal adjoining it were proposed and carried out. In the gardens I saw several *sadhus* (Hindu ascetics)—of whom I would gladly have had photographs—fellows with matted hair and rubbed over with fine ashes; but even these men, influenced probably by their environment, seemed to have taken unusual pains with their simple toilet and in the arrangement of their garments, such as they were. Some Akalis were also in the gardens, bristling with weapons, but somehow they did not look imposing, only ridiculous.

. . . . Meanwhile, I may note that as recently as 1905 the “advanced” party seems to have had sufficient influence to have Hindu idols removed from the *parkarma* or langar ambulatory referred to on a previous page.”

1912

J. FERGUSSON

History of Indian and Eastern Architecture (Delhi, 1912)

AMRITSAR

“One other example may serve for the present to complete what we have to say regarding the temples of modern India. This time, however, it is no longer an idol-shrine, but a monotheistic place of prayer, and differs, consequently, most essentially from those we have been describing. The religion of the Sikhs appears to have been a protest, alike against the gross idolatry of the Hindus and the inflexible monotheism of the Moslims. It does not, however, seem that temples or gorgeous ceremonial formed any part of the religious system propounded by its founders. Reading the Granth and prayer are what were insisted upon, but even then not necessarily in public. We, in consequence, know but little of their temples, of which they seem to have but few. Ramdas, the fourth Sikh Guru, or high priest, obtained a grant of the site of Amritsar from the tolerant Akbar, dug the tank, which is 170 yards, square, and began the temple, which was completed by his successor Arjun. It was named Har-Mandir, and stood in the middle of the tank but Ahmed Shah Abdali, on his return from Panipat in 1761, was opposed near Ludhiana by a Sikh army, which signally defeated, and entering Amritsar blew up the Har Mandir with gun powder and desecrated all their sacred places. The temple was rebuilt in 1766, probably on the same plan as well as on the site of the former. It stands on a platform 67 ft. square, connected with the north side of the tank by a marble causeway 203 ft. in length; the temple itself—40 ft. 4 inches square—is of two storeys, with a room on the roof, covered by the dome. Ranjit Singh after seizing the city in 1802, was too emulous of the wealth of his Hindu and Muslim subjects in this respect not to desire to rival their magnificence. He spent large sums on the Sikh temple, ornamenting its walls with marbles largely from Jahangir’s tomb, and roofing it with copper gilt, and consequently we have the Golden Temple in the sacred Tank at Amritsar—as splendid an example of its class can be found in India, though neither its outline nor its details can be commended (woodcut No. 355). It is useful, however as exemplifying one of the forms which Indian temple-architecture assumed in the 16th century, and where, for the present, we must leave it. The Jains and Hindus may yet do great things in it, if they can escape the influence of European imitation, but now that the sovereignty has passed from the Sikhs we cannot accept their priests or people to indulge in a magnificence their religion does not countenance or encourage.

At Nander, on the Godavari, midway between Aurangabad and Haidarabad there is another Sikh Dehra or Shrine. Here Gobind Singh the tenth and the last of

their Gurus or pontiffs, was stabbed by a Pathan servant and died in 1708 A.D. It is built on the plan of the Amritsar temple, being of two storeys, with the dome, which is over the square room in the centre of the structure, raised a story higher. This inner room has silver doors on the four sides and contains tomb about which are arranged swords, spears, shields, and steel discus, that are worshipped by the Sikhs of the colony settled in the town, and by numerous pilgrims that visit the shrine, as having belonged to the Guru. Round it is a corridor, as in many Mohammadan tombs, and the outer walls have a triple opening on each face, hung with curtains. In it the Granth is daily read and worshipped."

1946

PERCY BROWN

India Architecture (Islamic Period, Bombay, 1946)

"In a part of the country distinct from Oude but contemporary with its architectural productions there developed another late form of the Mughul style which had a limited vogue under the dominion of the Sikhs. The Sikh confederacy, which attained great power in the Punjab during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries may be defined in its religious aspect as a reformed sect of Hinduism, so that any buildings connected with the belief had to be so designed as to accord with its ritual and practice. The architectural style therefore adopted by the Sikhs, while, in appearance, of Mughul extraction, as the result of adaptations combined with elaboration, presents a certain character of its own, not, however, difficult to identify. Among its typical features are the multiplicity of chattris or kiosks which ornament the parapets, angles, and every prominence or projection; the invariable use of the fluted dome generally covered with brass or copper-gilt; the frequent introduction of and or embowed windows with shallow elliptical cornices and supported on brackets, and the enrichment of all arches by means of numerous foliations. From this it will be seen that details of a somewhat florid order dominate the style, but although few of the structures of the Sikhs aspire to any special architectural significance no one can fail to be attracted by their animated and picturesque appearance. Buildings of this kind are to be found in many towns of the Punjab, but the principal example is the celebrated Golden Temple at Amritsar, a monument in which all the characteristics of the style are fully represented.

The Golden Temple has a foundation of considerable antiquity but the structure of the present building dates from 1764, while the greater part of its architec-

tural appearance was added as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century. Its effect, which is very striking is enhanced by the main building rising from the centre of a large tank, the only approach being by way of a causeway across the water and over two hundred feet long. The idea of placing a monument in the middle of a sheet of water is not uncommon in India, as instances occur of this being done by each of the large religious communities. Not only done with practice an isolate a shrine from its earthly environment, but its reflections in the water add considerably to its artistic aspect. Such no doubt was the object of the Sikh community when it erected its most revered temple, the Durbar Sahib, or Harimandir as it is called, in the middle of the "Pool of Nectar". In the course of time the temple and tank became the focus of a complex of buildings which have grown up in the vicinity, most of which repeat in their architectural details the characteristics of the centre structure as for instance balconied windows thrown out on carved brackets, low fluted domes and ogee arches, elliptical eaves with multifoil soffits, and other structural embellishments of a similar order. On the western side of the tank is an archway opening on to the causeway, a paved approach bordered by perforated marble balustrades and standard lamps with elegant gilt lanterns at close intervals. In the centre of the tank this causeway opens out into a platform sixty five feet square and in the middle stands the temple proper, a square building of some fifty feet side. In its exterior elevation the shrine is a two storied composition over which rises a low fluted dome in gilt metal, while there are kiosks also with fluted metal cupolas at each corner. One large hall forms the interior, and the whole building is richly decorated with floral designs either painted in tempera or embossed in metal, the skilful handling of brass and copper being one of the crafts in which the Sikh workman excels. As an example not so much of architectural style but of religious emotion materialized in marble, glass, colour, and metal, the Golden Temple at Amritsar is equalled only by the Shwe Dagon Pagoda at Rangoon; the former symbolises the faith of the Sikhs, the latter is the highest expression in a very similar range of material of another great Indian religion, that of the Buddhists.

1969

MICHAEL EDWARDES

Indian Temples and Palaces (London, 1969)

THE GOLDEN TEMPLE, AMRITSAR

"Though the present structure of the Golden Temple, or Harimandir, the most sacred shrine of the Sikhs, dates from the middle of the eighteenth century, a temple

was first constructed on the site by the fifth guru, Arjun, two hundred years earlier. It was Arjun's first task, after assuming the spiritual leadership of the Sikhs, to erect a temple on the land given to his predecessor by the Mughal emperor, Akbar, in 1577, on which a new town had begun to grow up. In conformity with the eclectic nature of the Sikh religion, which sought to combine both Hindu and Muslim beliefs, it was a Muslim divine, Mian Mir of Lahore, who laid the foundation stone of the Hari Mandir, the temple of God.

Instead of building the temple on a high plinth in the Hindu style, Arjun had it built in a depression so that worshippers had to go down steps in order to enter it. Also, it had four entrances, symbolic of the new faith which made no distinction between the four Hindu castes. The cost of construction was raised by a donation from every Sikh, consisting of one-tenth of his income. When the temple was completed, the ceremonial pool was filled with water and named Amrit-sar or Pool of Nectar.

In 1595, Arjun began the compilation of a sacred anthology, the Granth Sahib, the Sacred Book of the Sikhs. Enemies of Arjun reported to the emperor Akbar that this anthology contained texts attacking Islam. On a journey north, passing near Amritsar, the emperor asked to see a copy of the book and satisfied that the allegations were baseless. Made an offering of gold coins. In 1604, the compilation was finished and the Granth Sahib was placed in the Harimandir where the practice of reading from it began.

Arjun's original foundation with, no doubt, additions and ornamentation seems to have survived the persecutions of later Mughal emperors who did not have Akbar's tolerance of other faiths than Islam. The trouble began with the decline of the Mughal empire in the eighteenth century and the frequent invasions by Afghans which followed the weakening of the Mughal central authority. In 1757, part of the Harimandir was destroyed as a reprisal for Sikh attacks on the Afghans, and the sacred pool was ritually polluted by being filled with the entrails of cows. The temple was rebuilt, only to suffer the same fate in February 1762, a month still remembered by Sikhs as the time of the Great Massacre. Two years later, for the third time, the Afghans blew up the temple with gunpowder and threw dead cows into the pool.

The architecture and the painting of the Sikhs has usually been dismissed as an adaptation of the style of other, more cultured, people, by plough peasants and freebooters with rather vulgar tastes. Not only are they said to have looted styles, they are also accused of having looted the materials with which to build their temples. In the case of the Harimandir, the looting is supposed to have been of marble from the tomb of the emperor Jahangir near Lahore, some 32 miles from Amritsar. It is only very recently that Sikh painting has been given serious study and Sikh architecture receives only passing mention in works on Indian art.

Undoubtedly the inspiration of Sikh architecture is that of the later Mughals. In the Punjab itself, there are many examples of fine Mughal buildings which, without question, must have influenced the designers of the Harimandir. It would be surprising if they had not, for the later Mughal style was one of the most seminal of art forms and its radiation area was considerable. Mughal art was a court art, and it was natural that Indian rulers should be influenced by it and take it as an example from which to copy in the early period of its influence, the copying was slavish. After the collapse of the Mughal central authority in the early eighteenth century, there was a dispersal of talent from Delhi, not only to the provincial courts of the great nobles of the empire who set themselves up as independent rulers, but also to many Hindu courts. In the Rajputana, the style was adopted by the rulers. The marble floors of the Harimandir were the work of masons from Jaipur. One of the Rajput states deeply influenced by Mughal forms, though it added local variants.

The most important influence on the Sikhs was, however, that of the so-called Kangra style. In the capital of Kangra, a state in the western Himalayas, a provincial Mughal style survived into the nineteenth century, and it is probable that, when the Sikhs captured the state, many of the craftsmen previously employed there left for the Punjab. Nevertheless, the Sikhs did not merely take over an existing and in fact rather sterile art form. They gave to it a special direction and flavour of their own. The marble slabs which make up the lower storeys of the Harimandir resemble Mughal work in technique, with their inlay of cornelian, lapis lazuli, mother of pearl and other stones. But, generally speaking, the colours are brighter, just as they are in the painted frescoes, and the subjects include not only flowers and semi-abstract designs with foliation and arabesques, but animals and flashes and on occasion, human figures also.

Even the extensive use of gilded copper sheets on walls and domes, though not unknown elsewhere in India, seems to have been adopted for a purpose emerging out of the history of the Sikhs. Invaders intent upon loot find metal sheets difficult to remove. Essentially, however the architecture of the Harimandir was designed as a statement of power just as much as the buildings of the Mughal emperors were. Ranjit Singh united the Sikh people for the first time and the gold and marble and precious stones used to refurbish the Harimandir were a proof to all Sikhs that their religion was, at last, free from threat after decades of persecution. The Golden Temple is a symbol, glowing in richness and colour. That richness has, over the years, been constantly renewed, not always perhaps in the best of taste. But the Harimandir is not a museum. On the contrary, it is a shrine, part of the essential machinery of a living faith."

APPENDIX B

THE TANK OF IMMORTALITY AND THE
HARIMANDIR IN THE ADI-GRANTH

Each day in the Divine Pool take bath;
Stir its water and quaff the Supreme elixir,
Divine amrita. (Pause 1)
The Name Divine is holy water;
Taking dips into it brings fulfilment of all objectives.

(p. 198)

One known as disciple of the holy Preceptor
Must, rising at dawn, on the Name Divine meditate.
At dawn must he no way fail to *rise*,
Should cleanse himself and *in* God's Name,
the Pool of Amrita take bath.
Then, as by the Master instructed, must he the
Name Divine repeatedly utter—
Thereby shall all his sins, evil and foul doings be shed.
Then with rise of day must he chant the Master's Word—
In rest and movement on the Name Divine must he meditate.
The disciple that with each breach and morsel on the
Lord meditates,
Shall the Master's pleasure win.
The Master to such of the disciples his teaching imparts,
As the Lord's grace have received.
Nanak, servant of God, seeks dust *of feet of*
such a disciple.
As contemplating *the holy Name*, to it inspires others. (2)

(pp. 305-06)

Devotees of God! noble is Ram Das's Pool:
Whoever therein bathes, saved is his family;

Liberated is his self. (I Pause)
 The world his glory sings,
 And his heart's desire he achieves.
 With weal and safety after the bath we returned,
 On the Lord meditating. (2)
 Whoever in the Pool of holy company bathes,
 The highest state achieves.
 By meditation on the Name Divine,
 Annulled is his transmigration. (3)
 This Divine philosophy to such *alone* is known,
 As have the Lord's grace.
 Of the devotee Nanak, seeking shelter of the Lord
 Is effaced all anxiety and reckoning *by Yama*. (4) (p. 623)

By bathing in the Pool of Ram Das,
 Are annulled all sins ever committed. (2)
 Ever chant Divine laudation;
 In holy company *on Him* meditate. (p. 624)

The Lord Creator the Pool has helped to build.
 Wealth is following after us—
 Nothing shall we *now* lack.
 This to the holy Preceptor is pleasing. (2) (p. 625)

His devotees' tasks has the Lord Himself undertaken to fulfil;
 These Himself has the Lord come to accomplish.
 Beauteous the spot, beauteous the Pool,
 wherein is filled water amrita-pure:
 Filled amrita-pure is the water, completed are all objects,
 Fulfilled all desires. (p. 783)

He whose task it was accomplished it—
 What is poor man?
 God's devotees shining in glory, the Lord's laudation sing.
 Ever raising shouts of His victory.
 By chanting Divine laudation has arisen joy,
 As with holy company have I made accord.
 How may His praise be recounted by
 whose endeavour is the Pool made?
 Included within it are the sixty-eight sacred spots, holy ceremonial
 And extremely pure rites.
 Purifier of the fallen, such is the Lord's law of grace—
 His Word Nanak's prop. (3) (p. 784)

To contemplate the Lord is this Divine Temple erected,
 Wherein God's Devotees His laudation sing;
 By contemplation of the Lord, all their sins they cast off.
 By chanting Divine laudation through the Lord's exalted Word
 Is the supreme state attained.
 Extremely delectable, inexpressible narrative is the Lord's
 discourse, conferring poise.
 Happy was the conjunction, the hour; holy the minute
 Wherein was this immutable foundation laid.
 Saith Nanak, servant of God: As the Lord showed grace,
 Were all powers in accord. (1) (p. 781)

Erected is my home; *planted* the garden and the Pool made;
 With touch of the Lord, Divine King am I blessed.
 Charmed is my heart, joyful are friends and loving associates;
 Chanted are paeans of joy and laudation of the Divine Monarch:
 By chanting Divine laudation and meditation on the Lord eternal.
 Are all objectives fulfilled. (p. 782)

Immutable is the city of the Divine Master,
 Wherein those contemplating the Name attain joy.
In this city founded by the Creator Himself
 Are fulfilled desires of the heart:
 Himself has the Lord founded it; all joys herein are obtained;
 To our progeny, brothers and disciples has come bloom of joy.
 As laudation of the Lord, perfection incarnate they sing,
 Fulfilled are their objectives.
 The Lord is Himself Master, guardian, father and mother.
 Saith Nanak: To the holy perfection incarnate they sing.
 Fulfilled are their objectives.
 The Lord is Himself Master, guardian, father and mother.
 Saith Nanak: To the holy Preceptor am I a sacrifice,
 Who this spot has embellished. (1) (p. 783)

"I have seen all places: there is not another like thee, For, thou wert
 Established by the Creator—Lord Himself, who Blest thee with Glory.
 O Ramdas Pur, how thickly populated thou art,
 and wearest unparalleled beauty,
 And whosoever batheth in this tank, is rid of his sins." (p. 1362)

GLOSSARY

Arabesque
Arch

Decoration with fanciful intermingling of ornamental elements.
An arc of a curve; a structure of wedge-shaped blocks over an opening so disposed as to hold together when supported only from the sides, the load resting vertically; a self-supporting structure composed of bricks or of stone blocks and capable of carrying a superimposed load over an opening.

Architecture

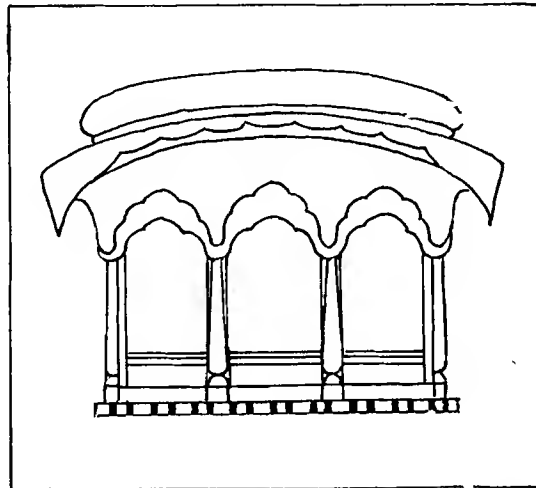
(Latin, "architecture", Greek "architekton"). The science as well as the art of designing the buildings.

Archway

Main entrance.

Balcony

A platform projecting from the face of a building outside supported on brackets, generally protected by a railing and sometimes covered by a roof.



Base

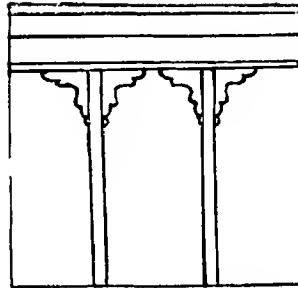
The lower portion of any structure or architectural feature.

Bokharcha

A large projecting window, with domical roof. It has three openings.

Bracket

Projecting member to support a weight, generally a beam, *chhaja* or a projecting window.



Causeway

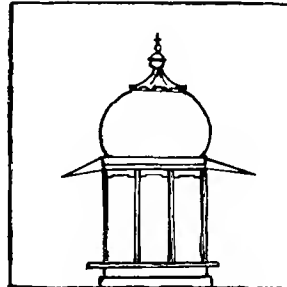
Raised road or path connecting the main building with subsidiary structure, often with water channels.

Ceiling
Chhaja

Covering surface under roof.
Over hanging cornice, eave.

Chhatri

A kiosk at a pavilion with four, six or eight pillars, generally with a cupola roof.



Congregation
Conventional

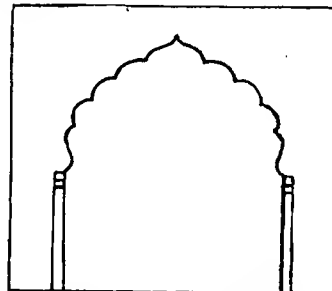
Assembly of the faithful for prayers.
Conventionalized pattern. A floral design, which adopts a set form after constant use and loses natural bands and twists; adapted and highly sophisticated form of a floral design.

Cornice
Cupola

Any crowning portion or projection.
Spherical roof placed like an inverted cup over a circular, square or multi-angular apartment; it is generally crowned by lotus-petals and a finial or *kalaśa*.

Cusp, Cusped

Projecting point between small arc of an archway or a window.

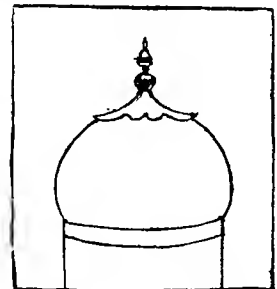


Design

The architect's graphical solution of a project or programme—economically, structurally and aesthetically.

Dome

A convex roof of approximately spherical form. Cupola is an almost synonymous term.



Drum

The cylindrical lower part of a dome, base or the neck of the dome.

Eave

Chhaja, lower portion of a roof projecting beyond the face of the wall.

Facade

Front view or elevation.

Finial

The upper portion of a pinnacle, the crowning member of the dome or cupola.

Floral

A design pattern with flower, leaves and other similar motifs.

Fluting

Vertical channelling on the shaft of a column or dome.

Fresco

The term originally applied to painting on a wall while the plaster is wet, but often now used for any wall painting not in oil colours.

Gallery

Passage common to rooms in an upper storey.

Gilding

A coat of gold or other brilliant colour over a piece of stucco, or painting.

Gothic

Pointed arched style prevalent in Western Europe during the 12th to the 16th centuries.

Gombaz

Dome.

Inlay

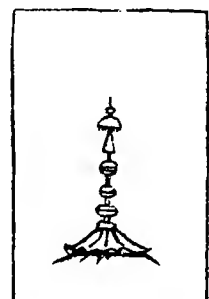
Ornamentation composed of specially cut pieces of rare or semi-precious stones laid in sockets engraved in a stone or marble slab according to the design.

Intonaco

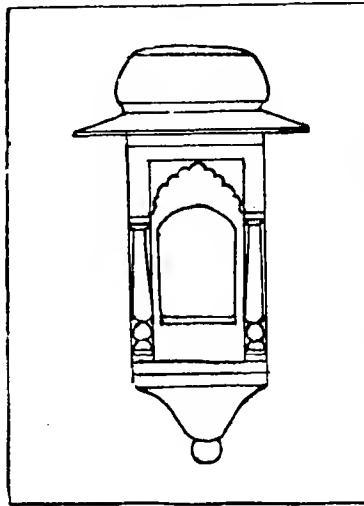
Plaster or stucco background for the painting.

Kalasa

The Hindu "water-pot" (*kumbha*). Integral part of the finial used to crown the domes and cupolas of the *chhatris*.

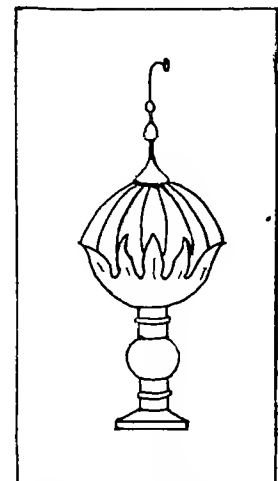


Kiosk, Chhatri	Small pavilion usually with its roof supported by pillars, a small architectural member generally on parapet or roof.
Logia	A gallery open to the air, verandah.
Mausoleum	Large tomb building.
Mortar	Mixture of lime, sand and water for joining stones or bricks.
Mosaic	Combination of small pieces of hard substance, such as glass, stones, marbles, generally multi-coloured, to form a design; a form of surface decoration with the help of small pieces laid in plaster.
Motif	The dominant or distinctive feature or element of a design.
Mouldings	The contour given to projecting members or projections worked respectively below or above a plane surface.
Multifoil	An arch having more than five cusps.
Mural	Wall decoration.
Niche	Recess in a wall for the reception of a statue or ornament.
Ogee	A form of moulding or arch made up of a convex and concave curve.
Ogee Arch	A pointed arch of double curvature, the lower curve being convex and the upper curve concave.
Oriel	Projected window supported on brackets or corbelling.



Ornate	Given to decoration, richly decorated, embellished with ornament.
Pagoda	Tall structure in several storeys.
Panel	Sunken or raised compartment in a wall ceilings or doors.
Parapet	The upper portion of a wall, above the roof.
Pavement	A floor which has been paved with bricks or stone.
Pavilion	An open summer-house lightly built; it is generally pillared.
Pedestal	The base supporting a column, statue or obelisk.
Pier	Supporting mass other than a column.
Pietra Dura	Inlaid mosaic of hard and expensive stone.
Pigments	Colours or other materials used as colours in paintings.
Pilaster	Square pillar projecting from a wall.
Pillar	(Latin "pila"). A slender vertical structural member bearing a load whereas a pillar may be square, oblong polygonal or circular in section, a column is always circular.

Pinnacle	A small turret like termination on the top of pilasters, buttresses, parapets or elsewhere, often ornamented with bunches of foliage or lotus flowers and a kalasha finial.
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Plan	Representation of a building showing the general distribution of its parts in horizontal section.
Plinth	Lower portion or base, of a building or column.
Portal	Doorway.
Rib	A projecting band on a ceiling or vault.

Sanctum-Sanctorum Main room in which the holy book or statue is placed for worship.

Shaft Portion of a column between base and capital.

Sish Mahal A mirror hall.

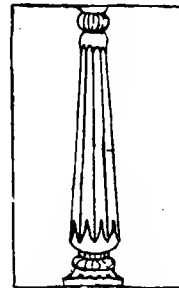
Spiral Rotating member (ramp or staircase) round the circular shaft of a structure which helps in ascending or descending or passing through thick walls.

Squinch Arch Arches placed diagonally at the angles in the interiors of domes to connect from square to round.

String-Course A horizontal moulding often under a parapet.

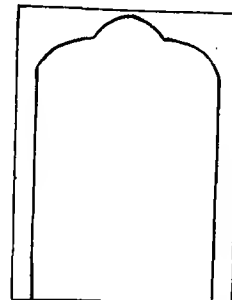
Structure A building; framework or fabric of a building as opposed to its ornamental features.

Taper Determined slope in a structure along its elevation line.



Tempera Distemper; method of mural painting by means of a "body" such as white pigment.

Trefoil Arranged in three lobes, an arch with three cusps.



Turrets Small towers, generally attached at the angles or Quoins in buildings.

Vault Arched covering over any space.

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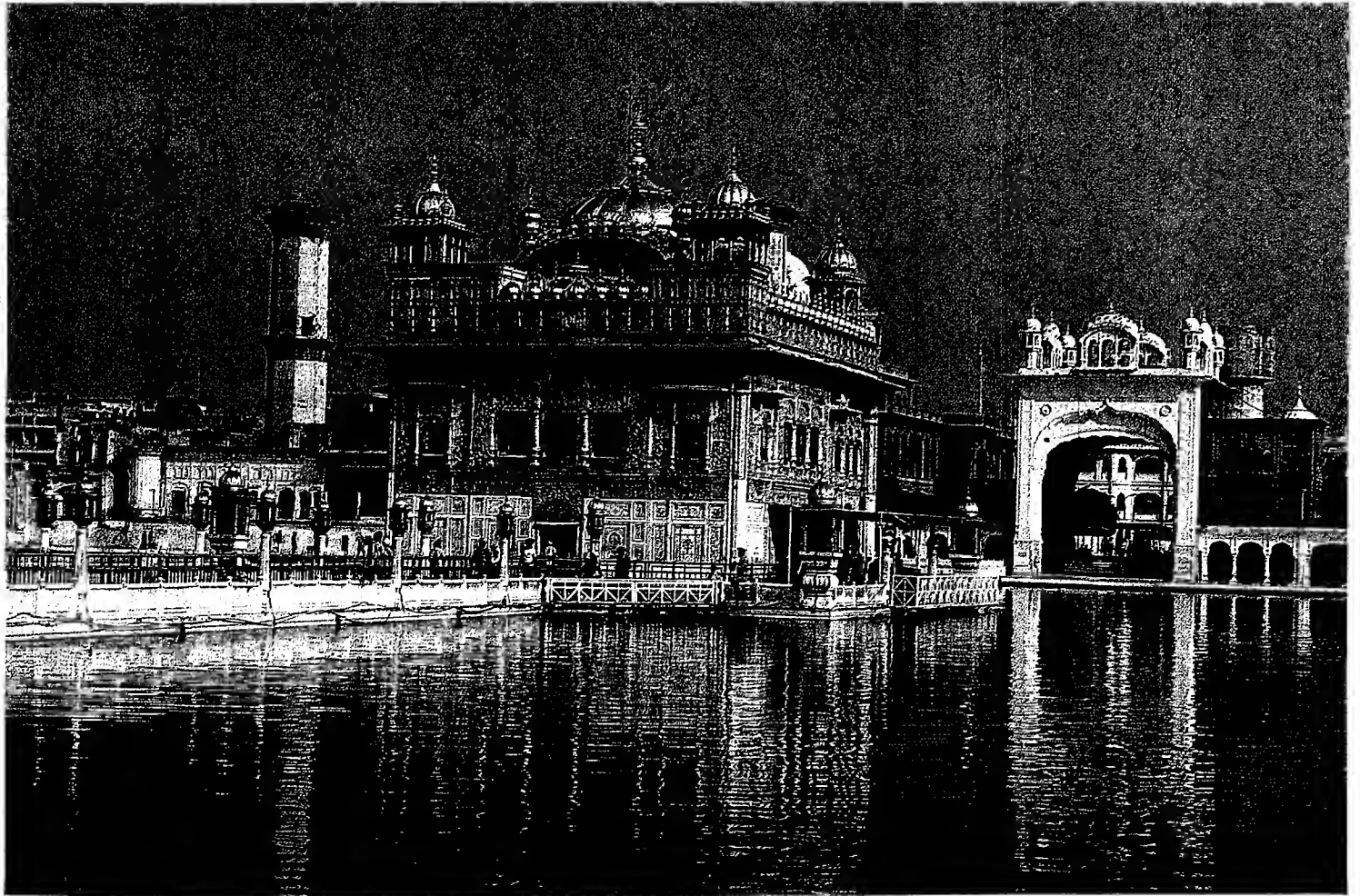


Plate 1. Front view of the Golden Temple. Eastern entrance to the circumambulatory path and the Ramgarhia Bunga is seen in the background

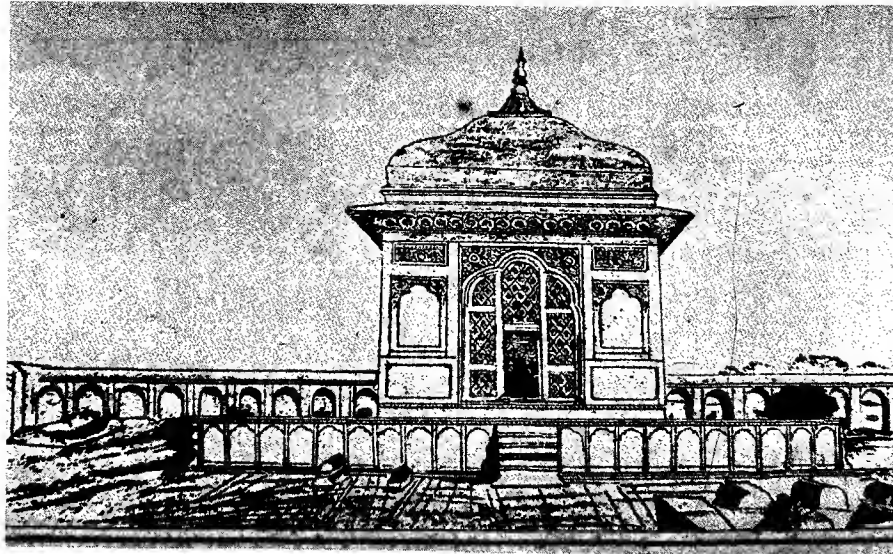


Plate 2. Line drawing of the Tomb of Mian Mir at Lahore (Pakistan)

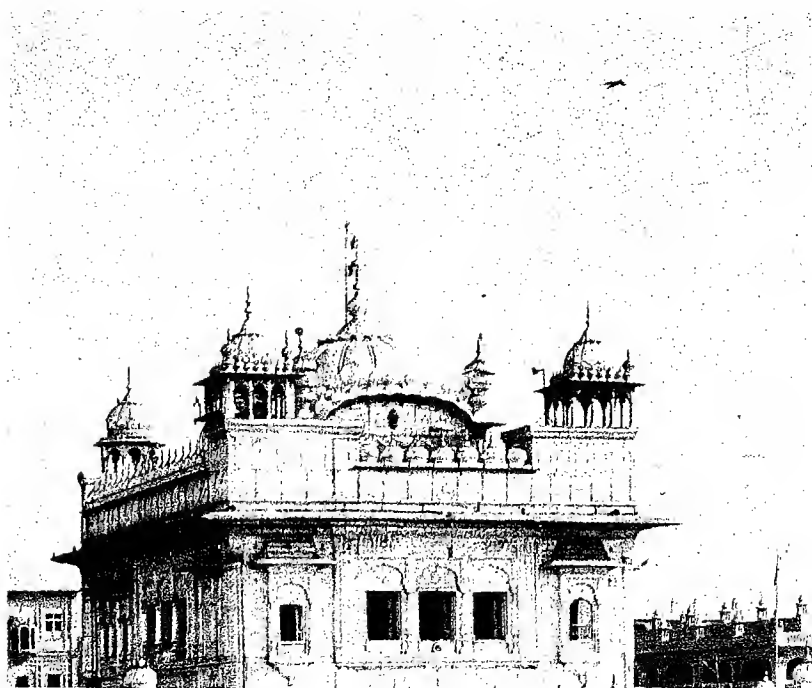


Plate 3. Upper storeys of the Golden Temple surmounted by low-fluted dome, rows of cupolas and *chhatris*. The whole of the surface above the marble frontage is covered with heavily gilded copper plates.

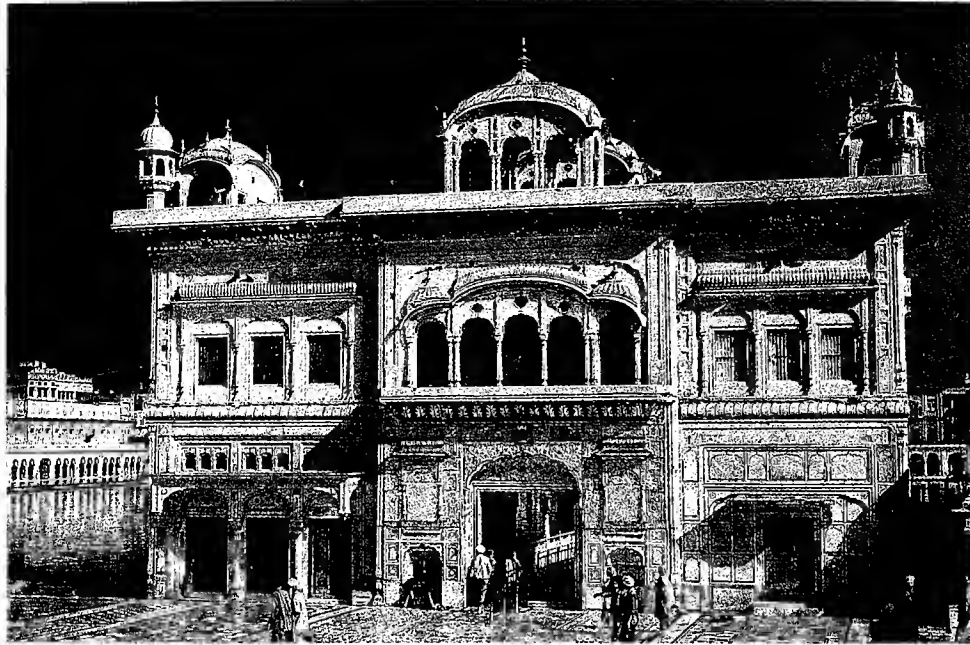


Plate 4. Facade of Darshani Deorhi facing the Akal Takhat.

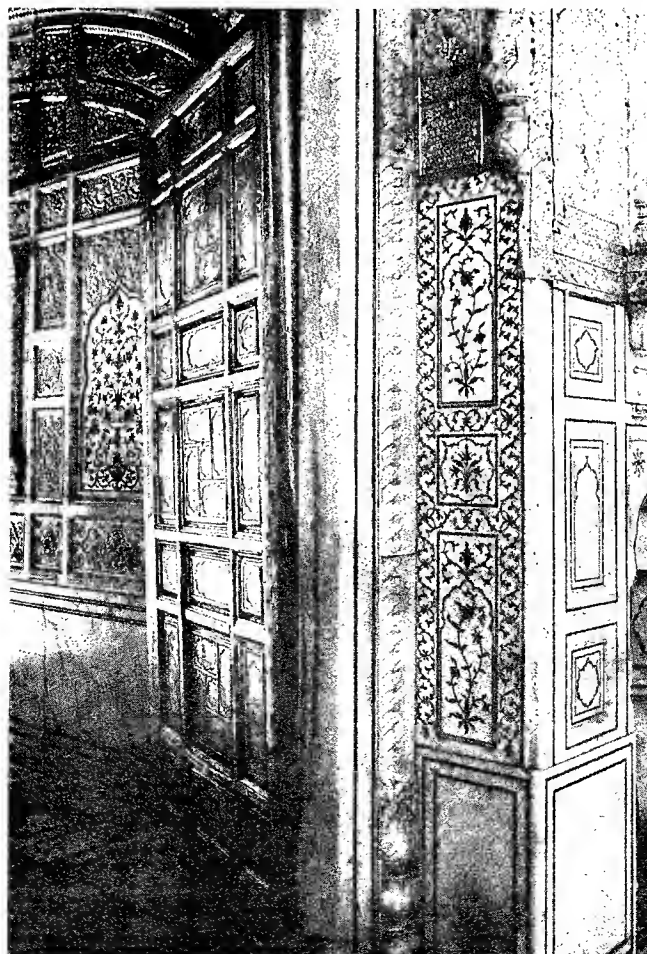


Plate 5. The portals of the orchway (Darshani Deorhi) are inlaid with panels of silver. The interior of the orchway is similarly embellished with inlaid marble and gilded copper.

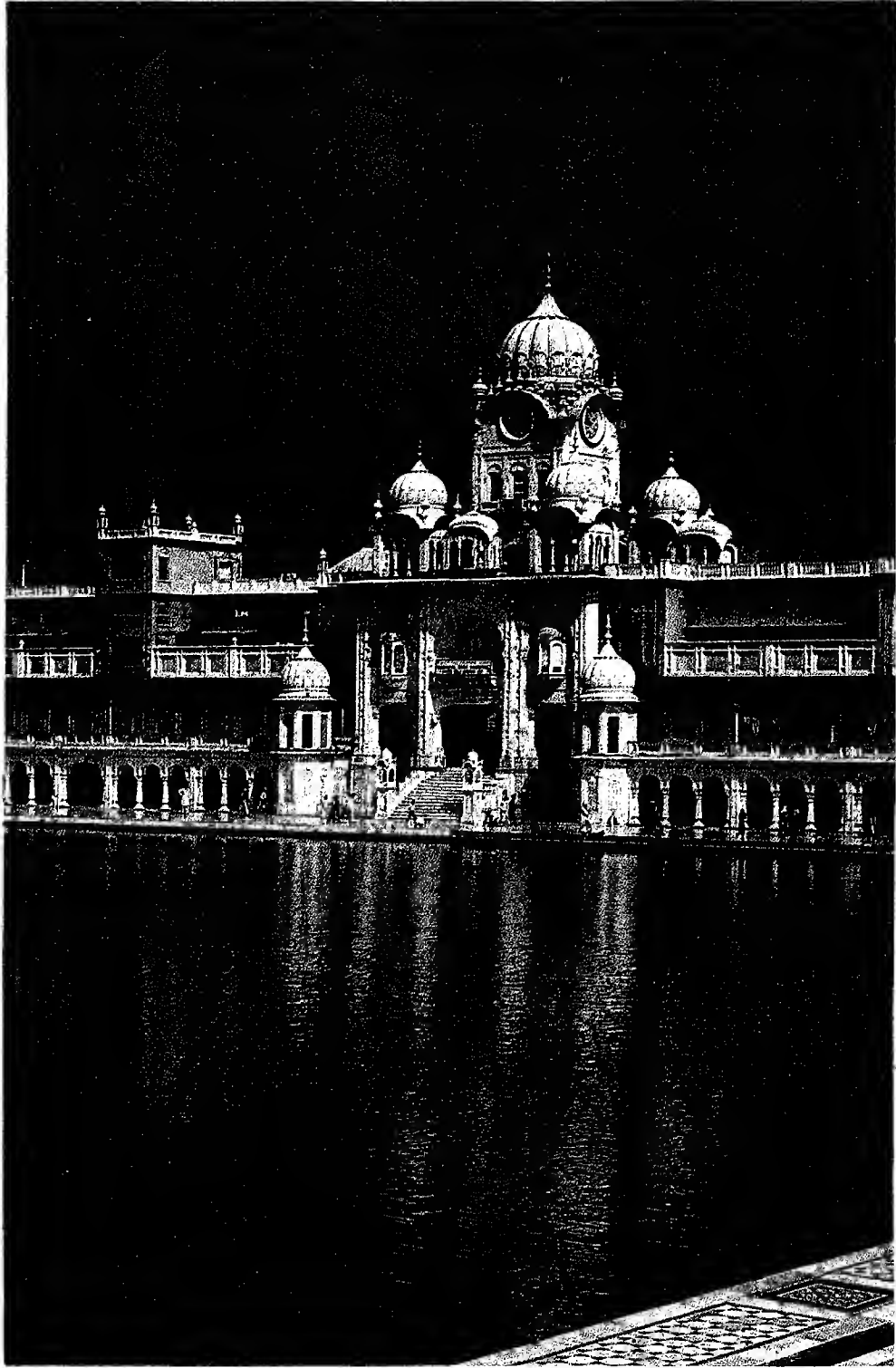


Plate 6. Clock Tower. (southern facade facing the Temple)

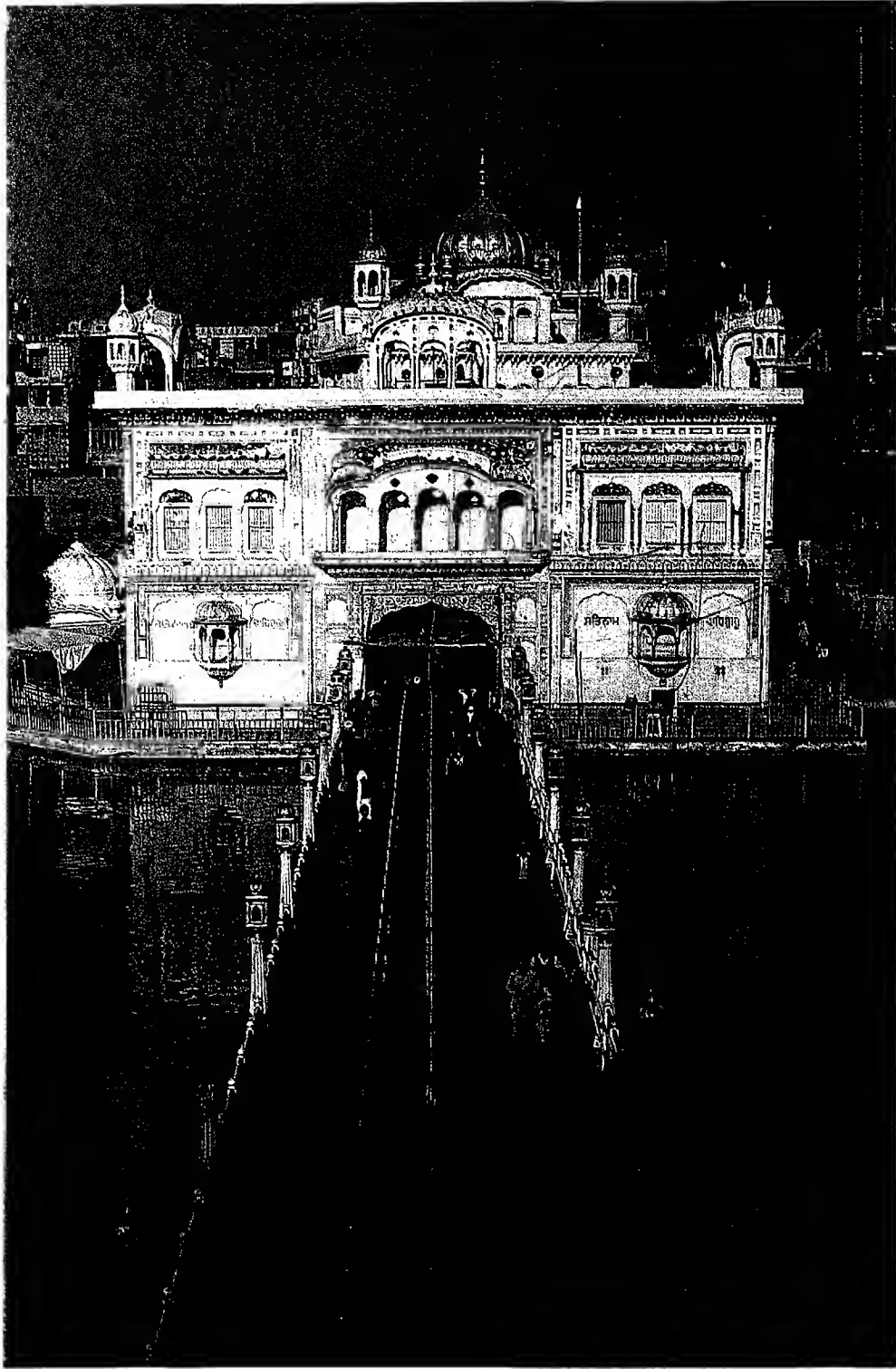


Plate 7. Archway and the bridge as seen from the top of the main shrine.

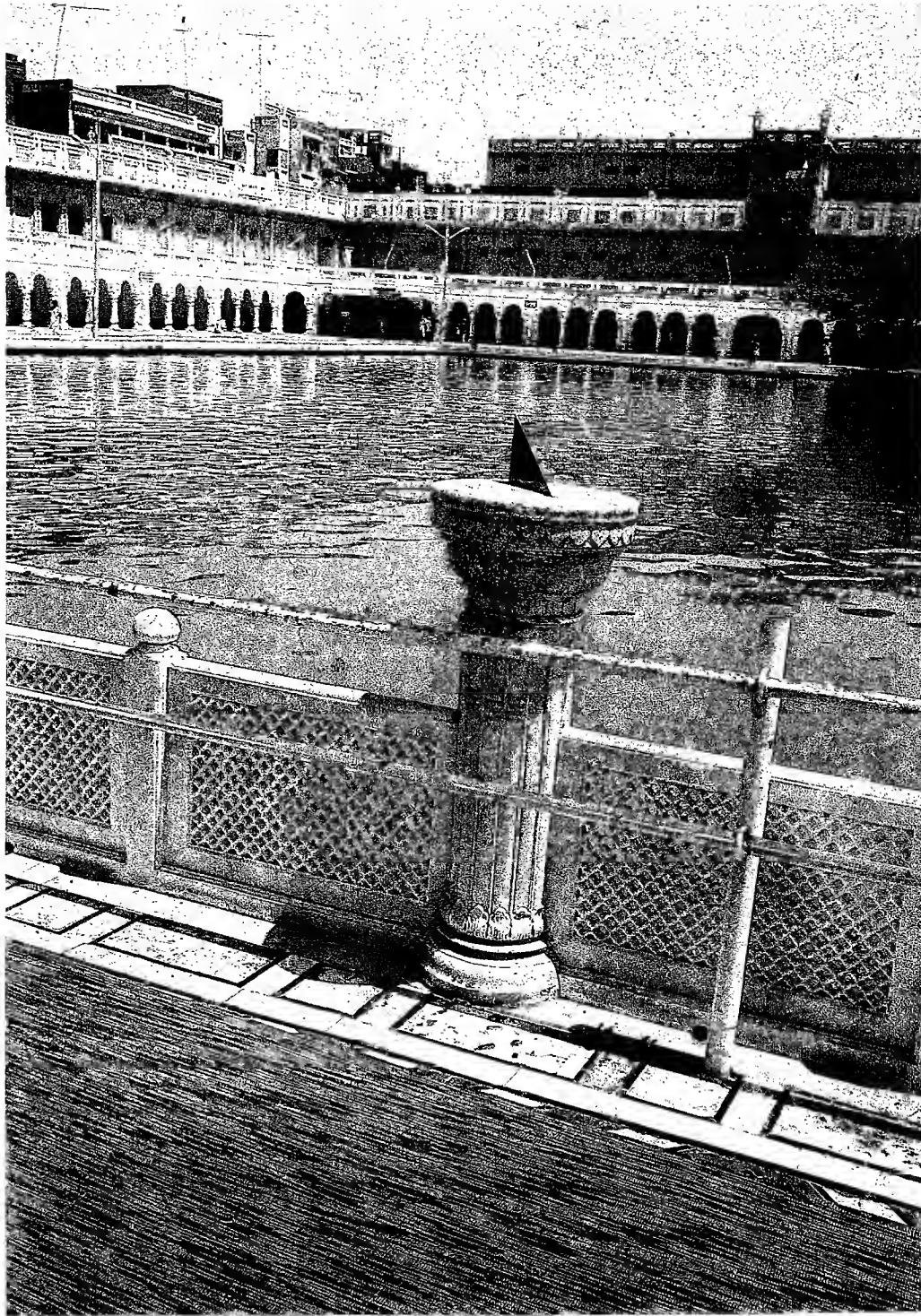


Plate 8. Sun dial (Dhup Ghori) on the left edge of the causeway.

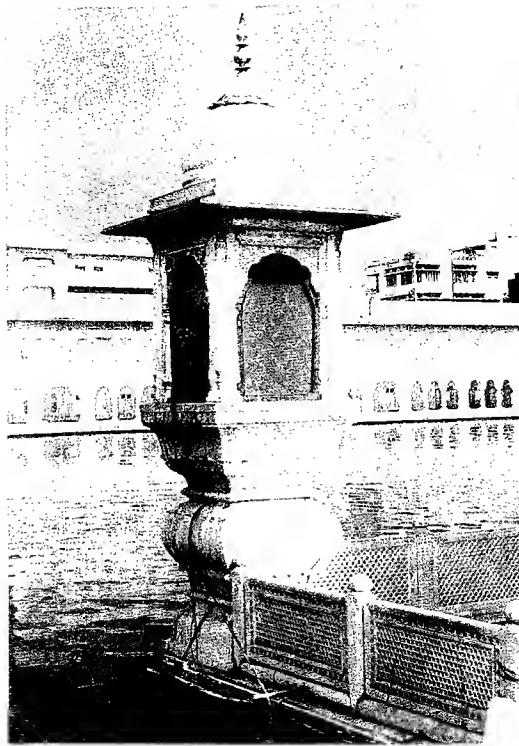


Plate 9. A beautiful pigeon house stands in one of the corners of inner *parikarma*.



Plate 10. Row of small cupolas at the top of the western facade. The central one is surmounted by an umbrella, a symbol of royalty.

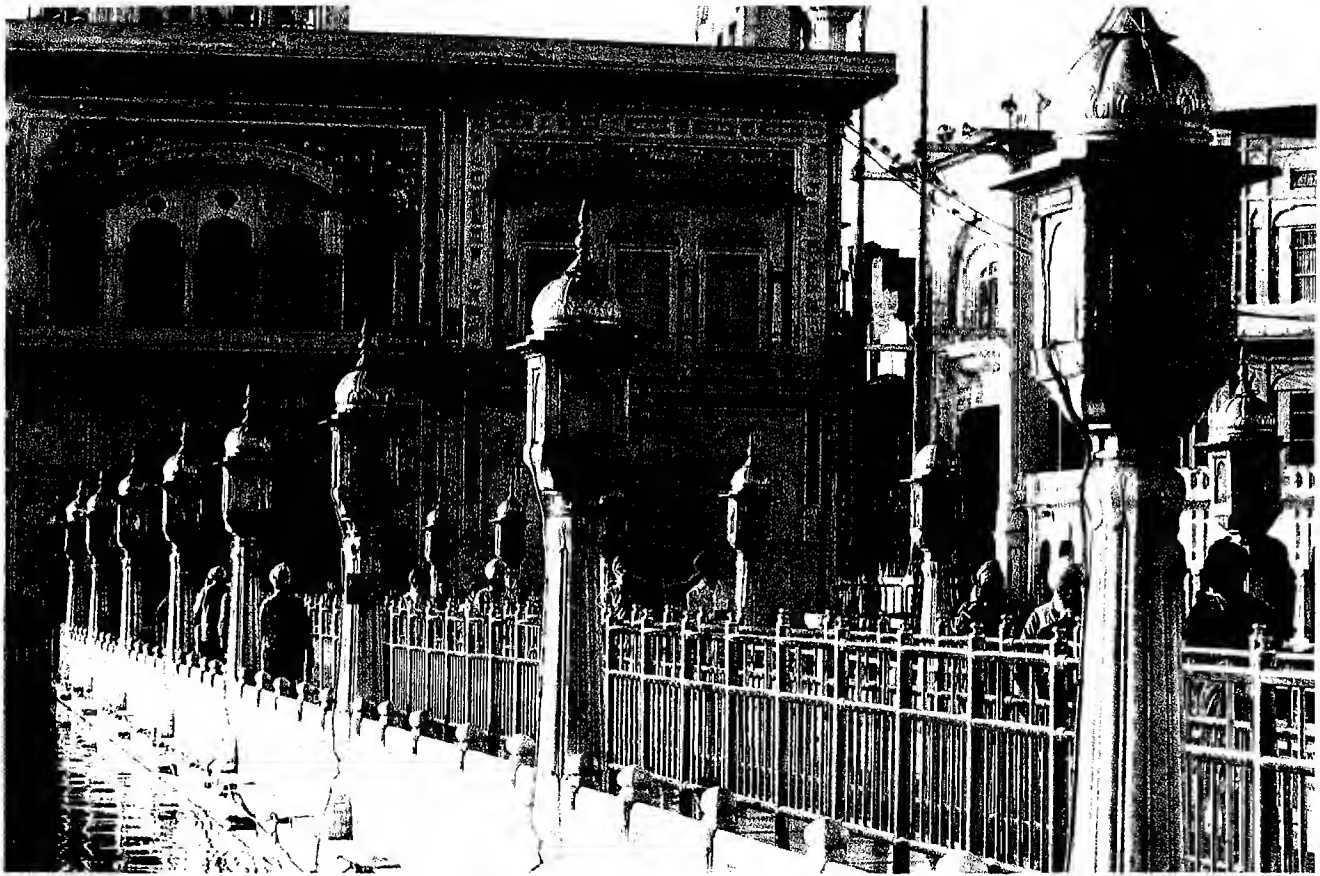


Plate 11. Rows of lamp posts (Lanterns) on the causeway leading to the main entrance to the *sanctum sanctorum*.

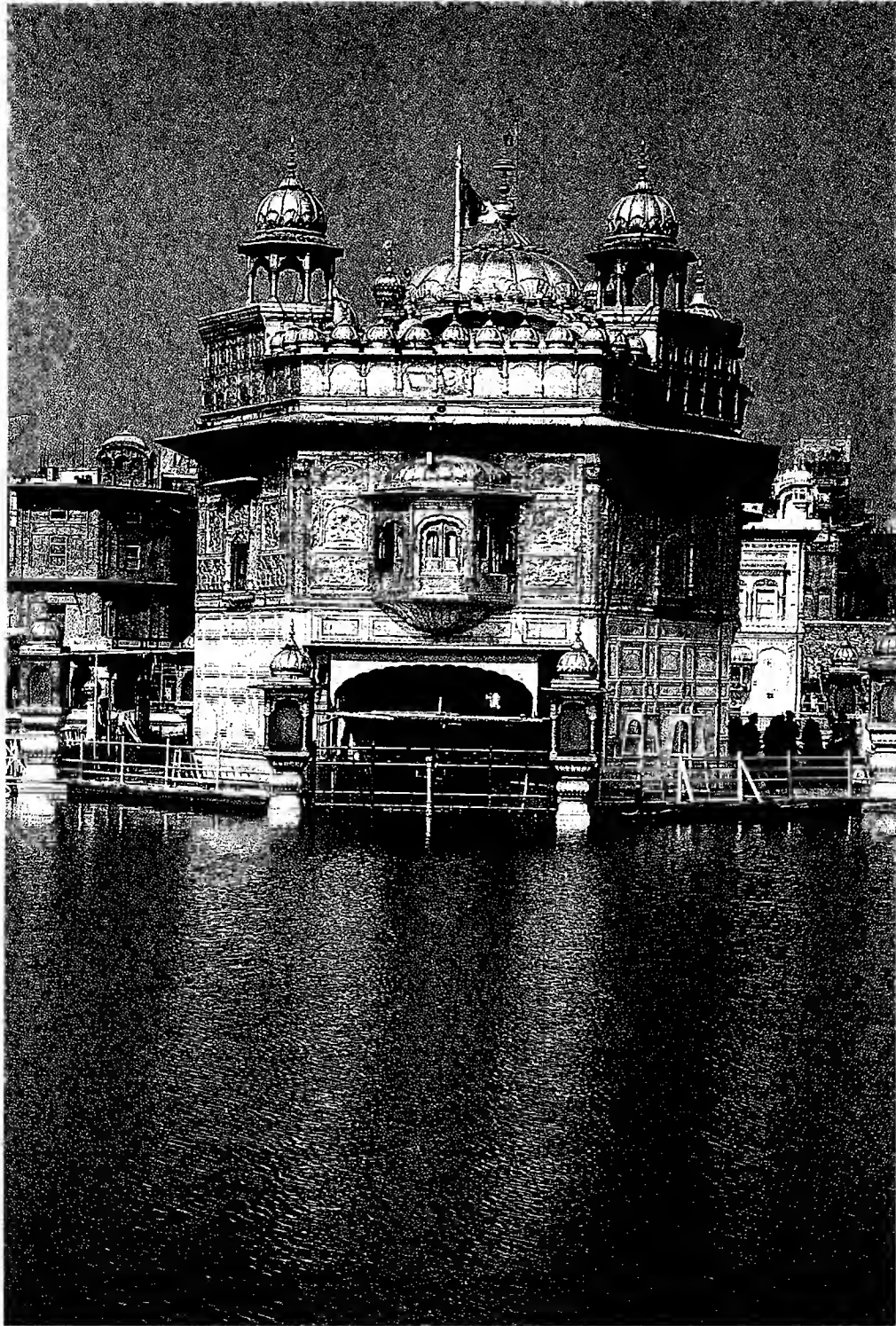


Plate 12. Eastern facade (*Har Ki Pauri*) of the Golden Temple.



Plate 13. An óriel window from the western facade.

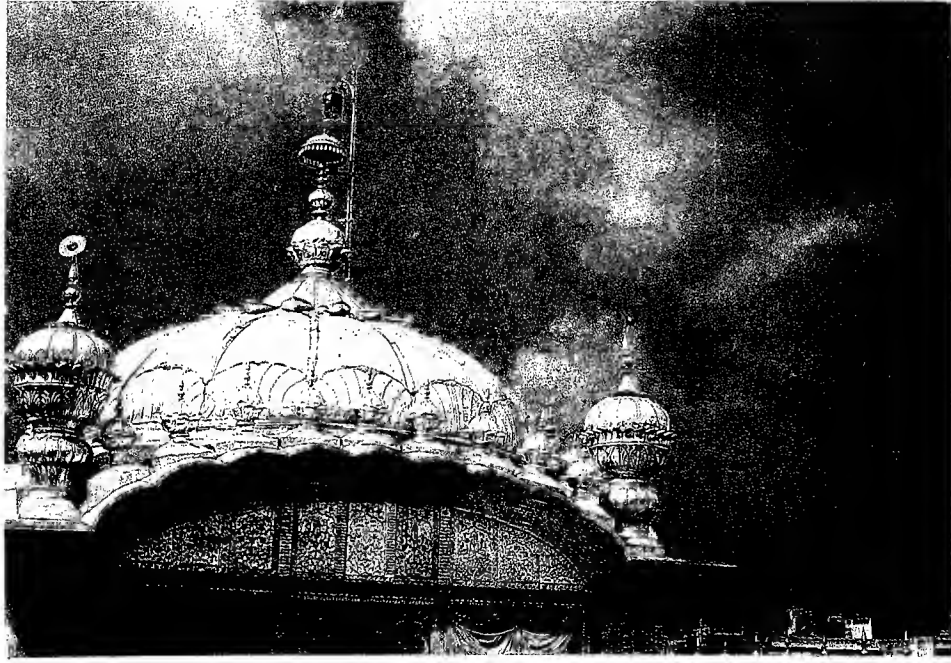


Plate 14. The ornate dome with kalasha and an umbrella at the top.

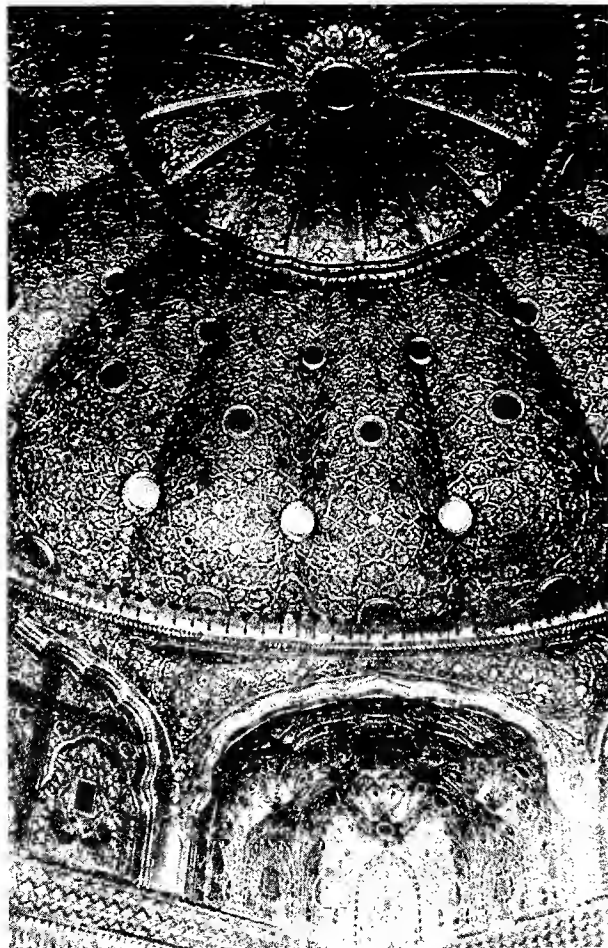


Plate 15. Squinch system employed in the construction of the central dome.



Plate 16. An Octagonal *chhatri* (air house) on the eastern corner of the parapet



Plate 17. A beautiful kiosk on the corner of the third storey.

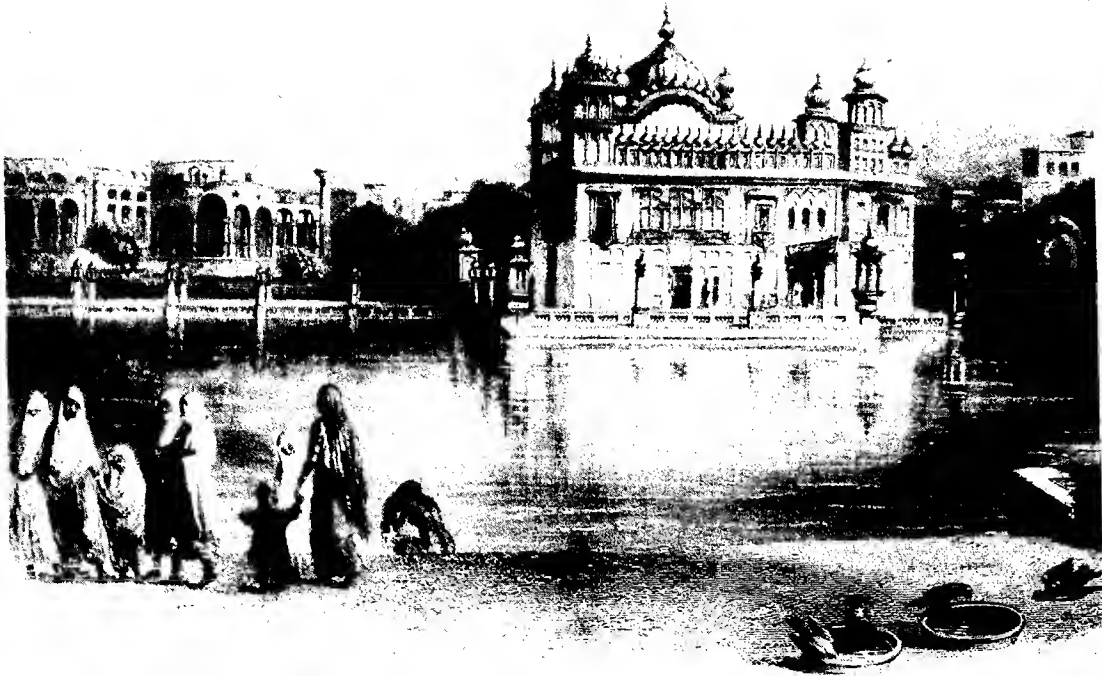


Plate 18. The Golden Temple and the Bunga of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh. A painting done by same nineteenth-century European artist.

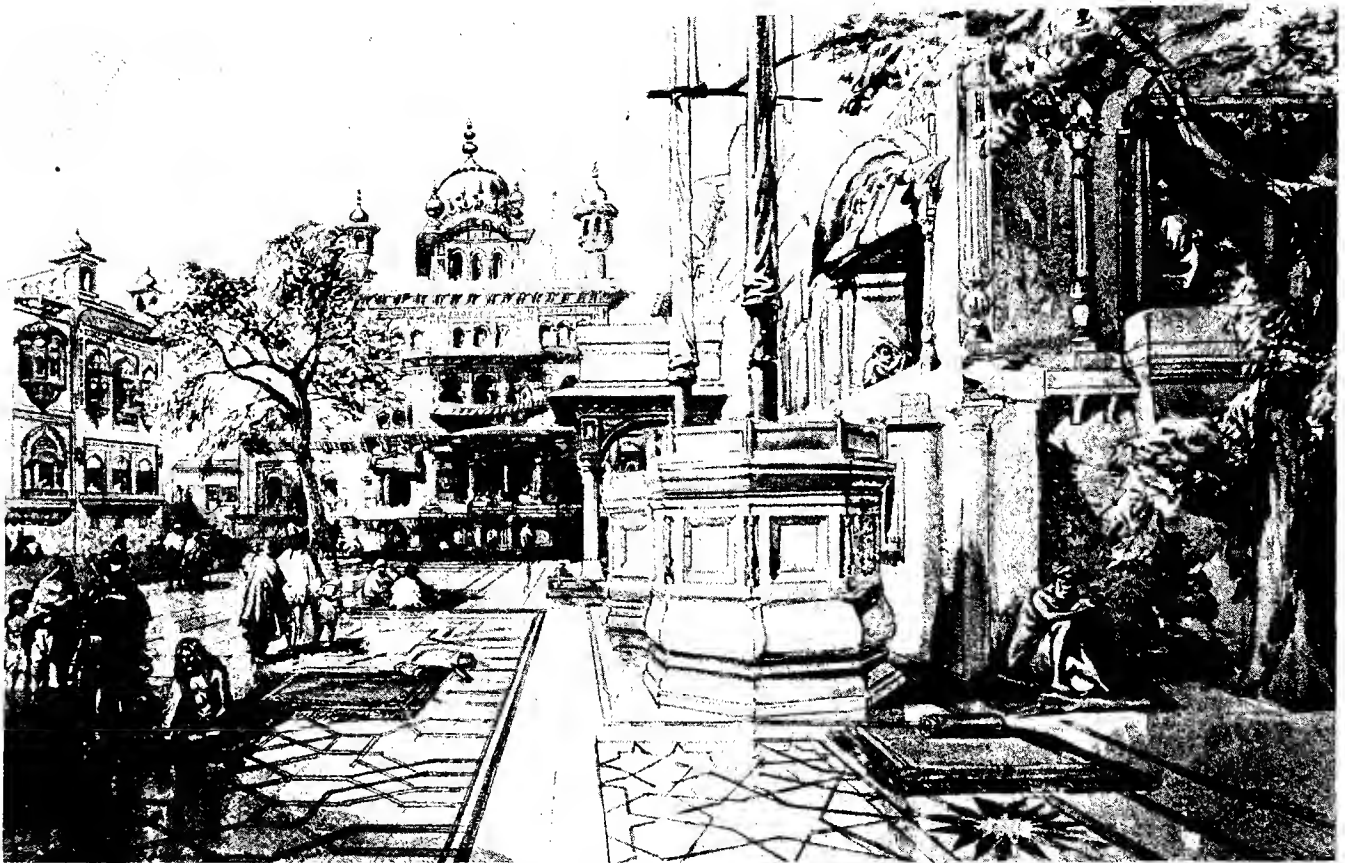


Plate 19. A nineteenth-century painting of Akal Takhat, the first treasury building of the Temple, and the Jhanda Bunga (*courtesy*: Albert Museum, London, Crown Copyright).



Plate 20. A view of the eastern side of the outer circumambulatory path.

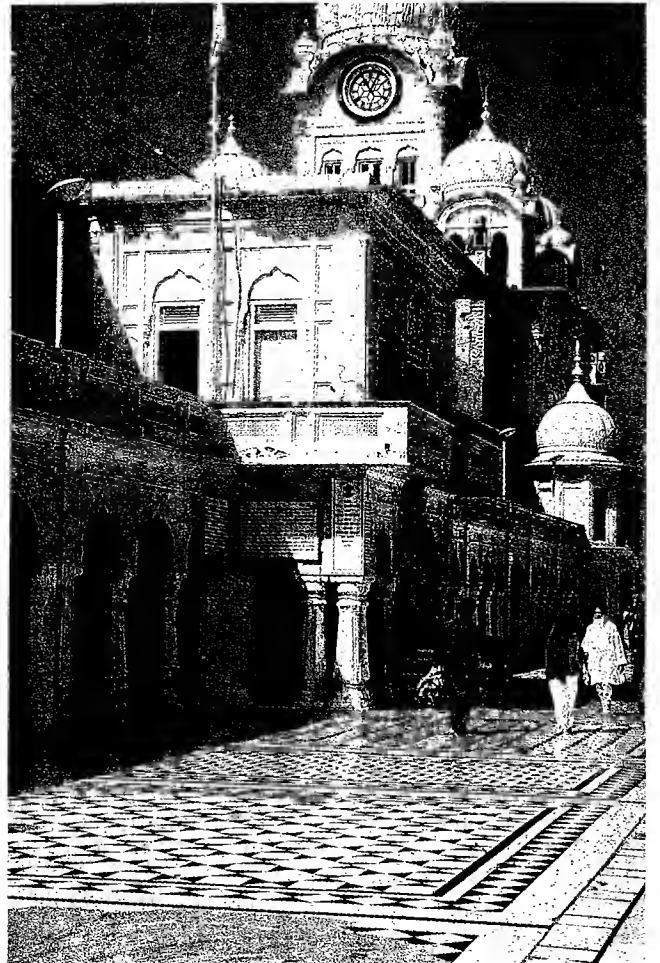


Plate 21. Bunga Baba Deep Singh, situated in the southern side of the *parikarma*.



Plate 22. A row of small cupolas and a rectangular chhatrī decorates the parapet.

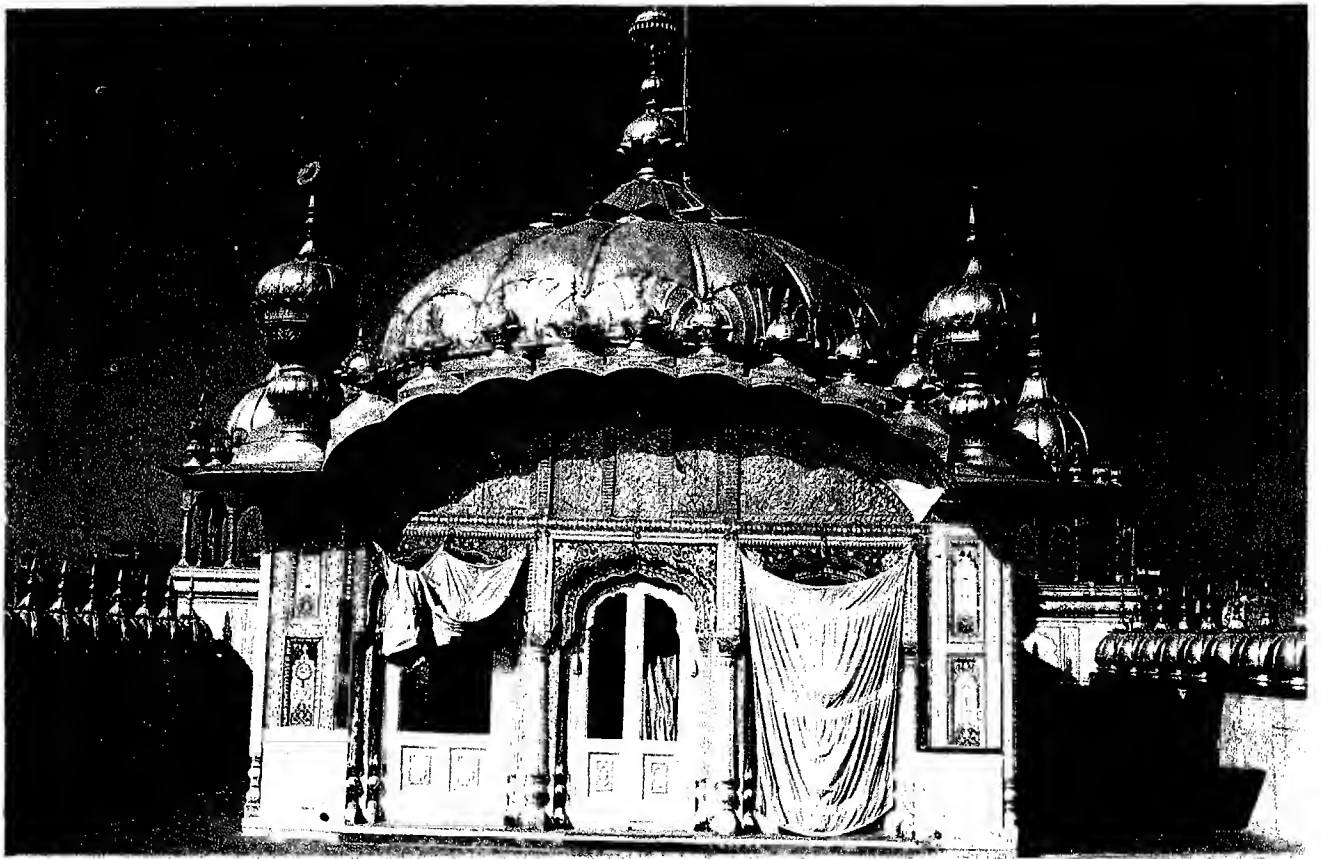


Plate 23. Third storey supporting the main dome and the rows of small cupolas.

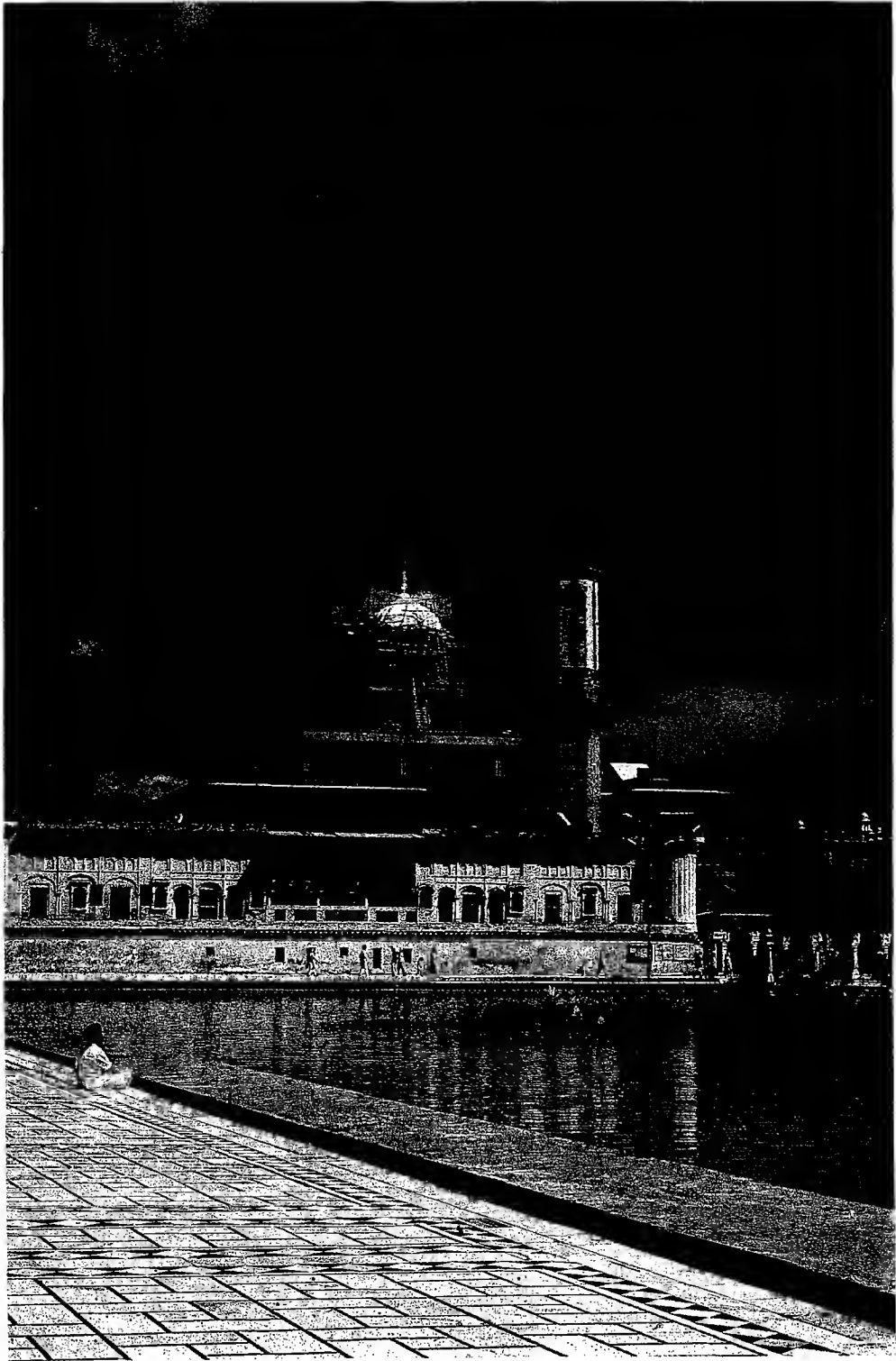


Plate 24. Tank of Immortality, the Ramgarhia Bunga and the new building of the langar.

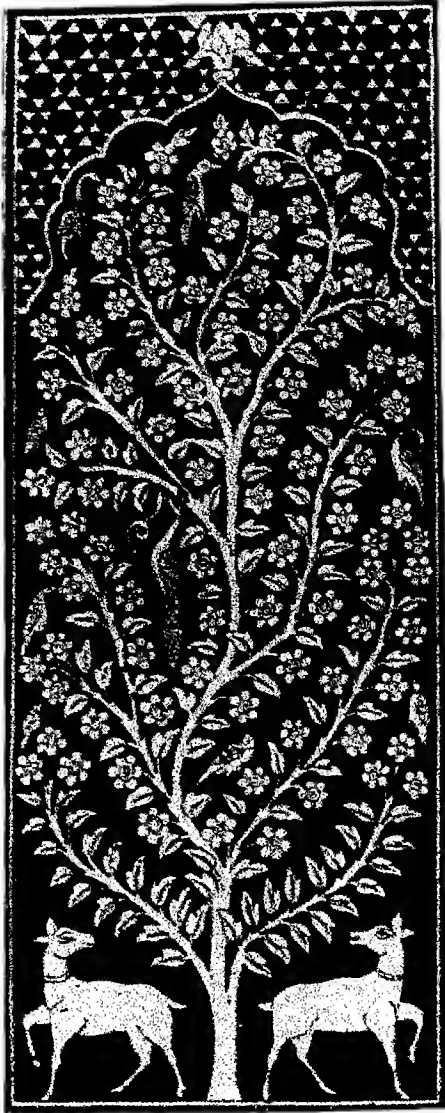


Plate 25. Ivory mosaics on the backside of the portals of the archway. Inlaid in square and rectangular panels with geometrical and floral patterns inserted with animals and birds.



Plate 26. Gurudwara Lachi Ber near the Darshani gate.

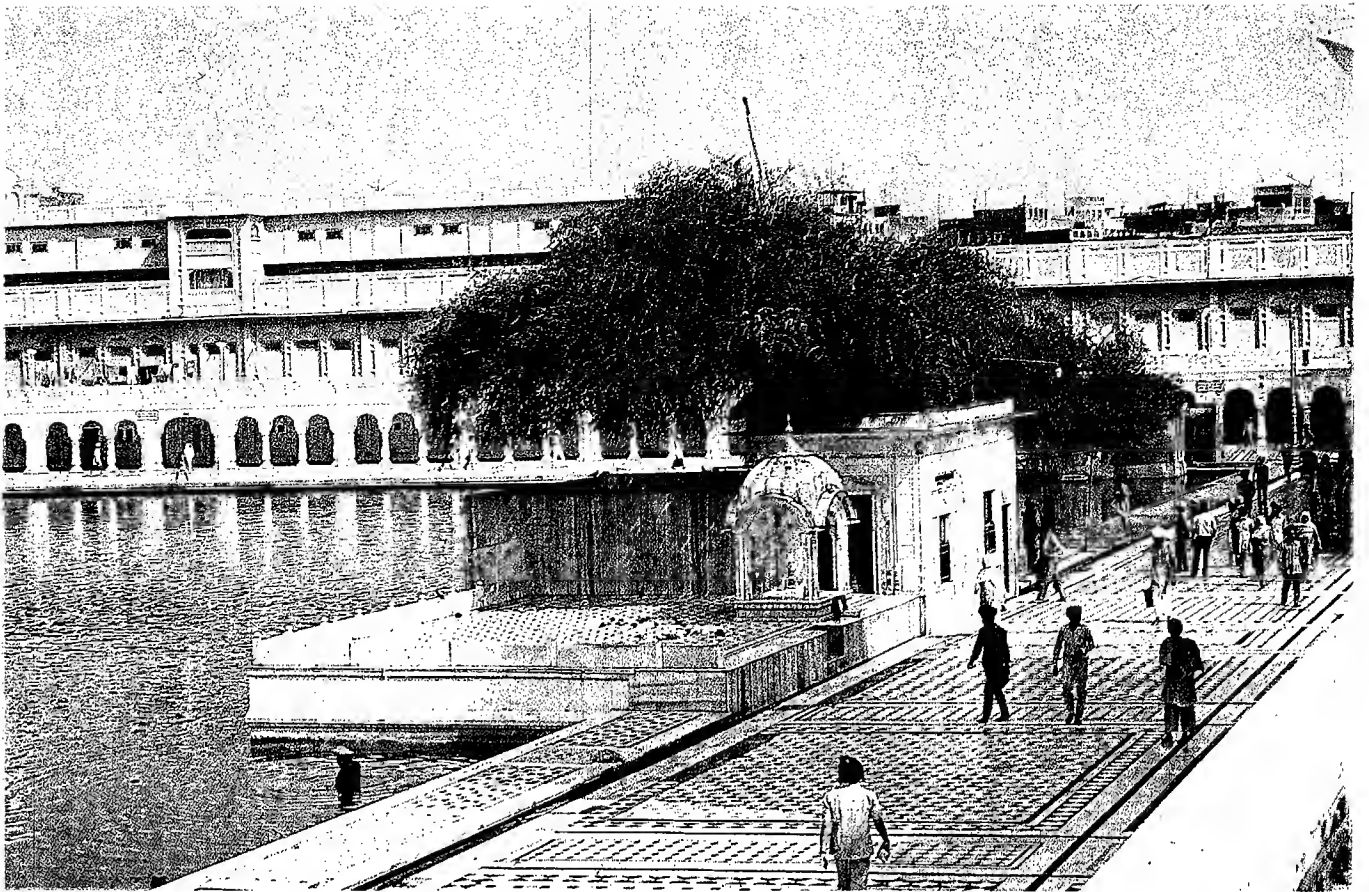


Plate 27. Gurudwara Ath Sath Tirath situated on the eastern banks of the Tank of Immortality.

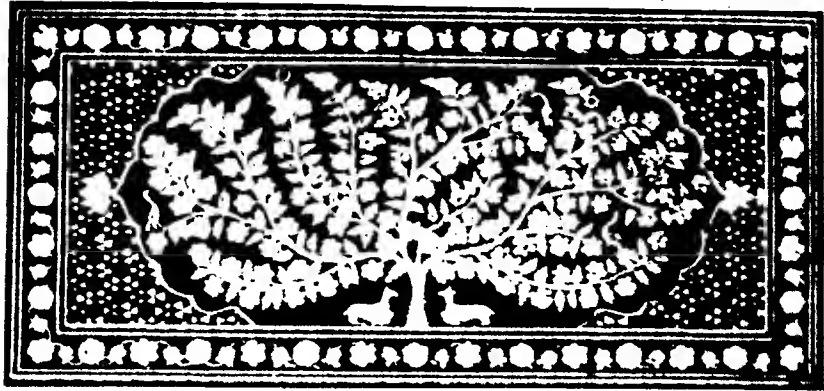
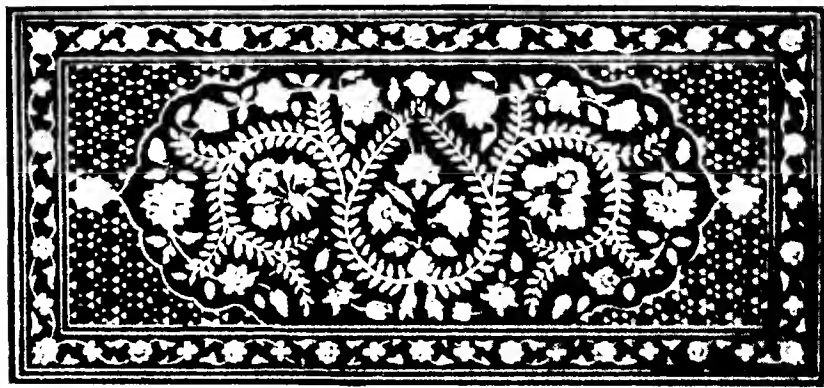


Plate 28. Florol patterns of wood and ivory mosaics on the bockside of the orchway doors.

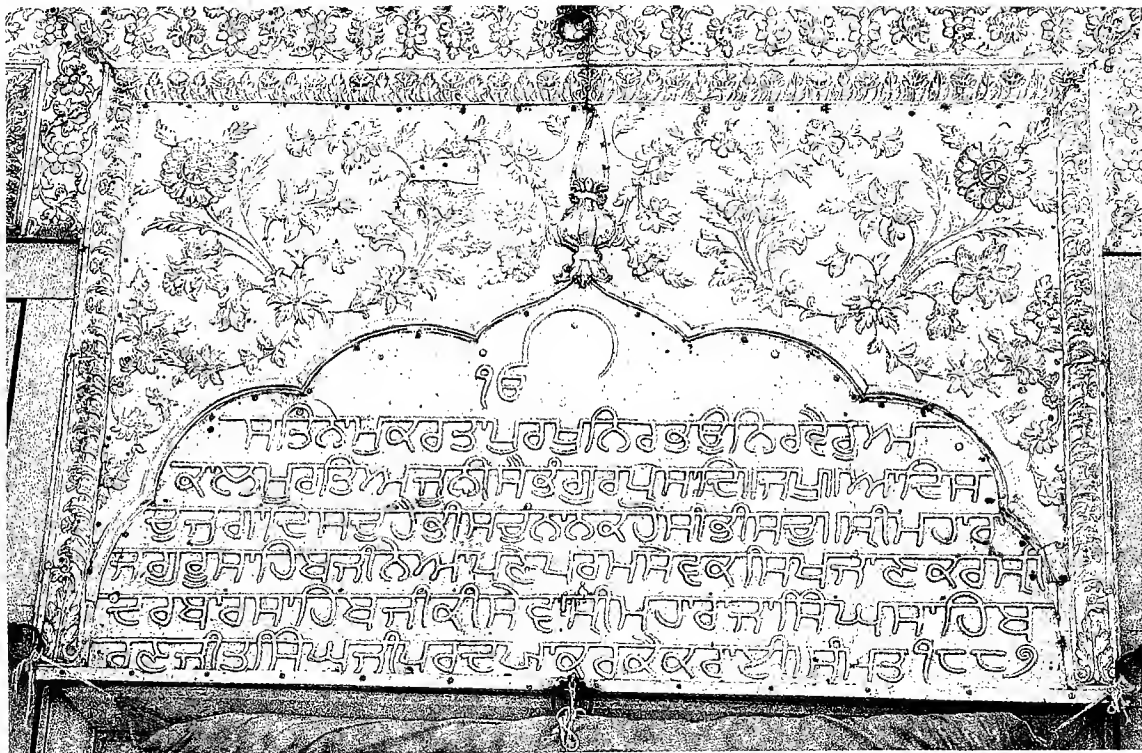


Plate 29. Golden ploque on the main entrance to the *sanctum sanctorum* commemorates the services of Mohorojo Ronjit Singh.

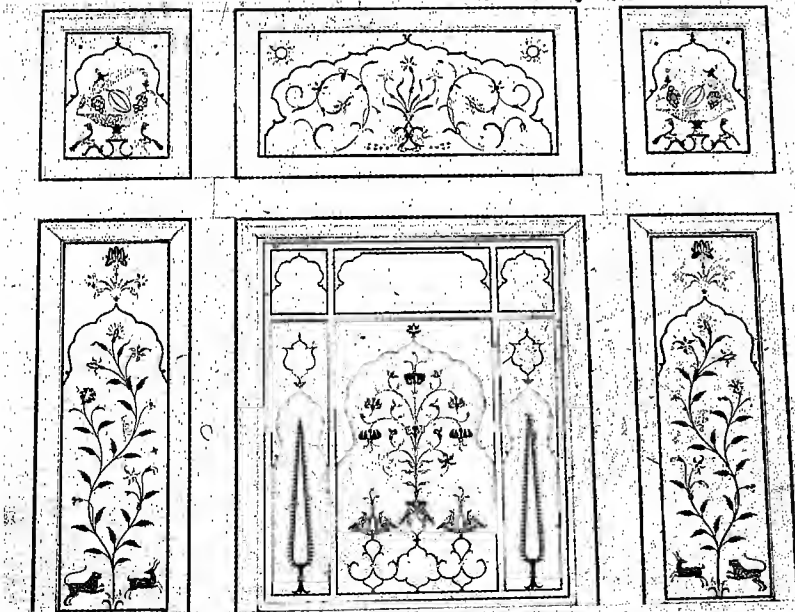


Plate 30. The inlaid marble panels with pietra dura stands out against the gilt of the upper storeys.

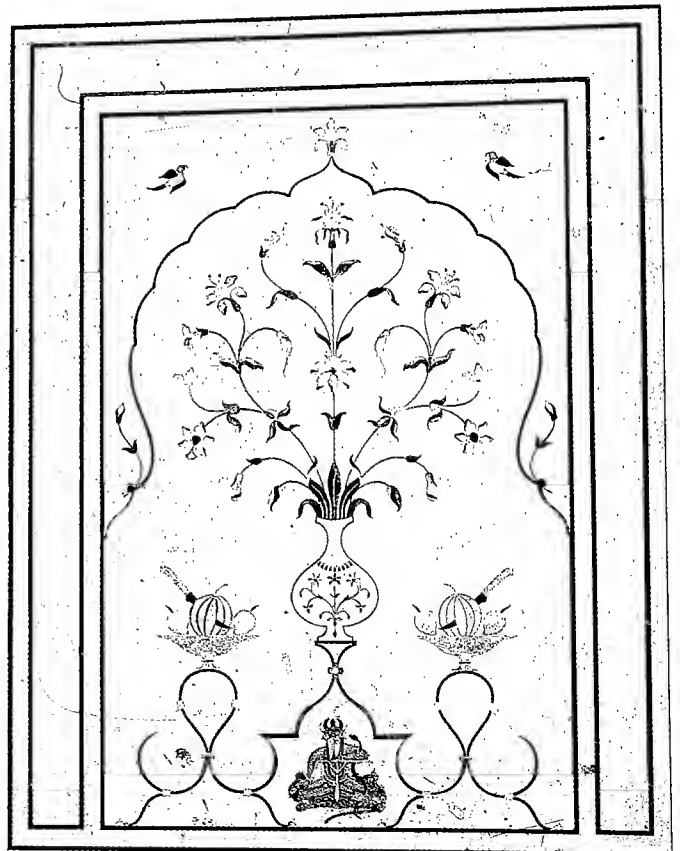


Plate 31. A close-up of inlaid marble panel depicting the birds, fruit and flora and four

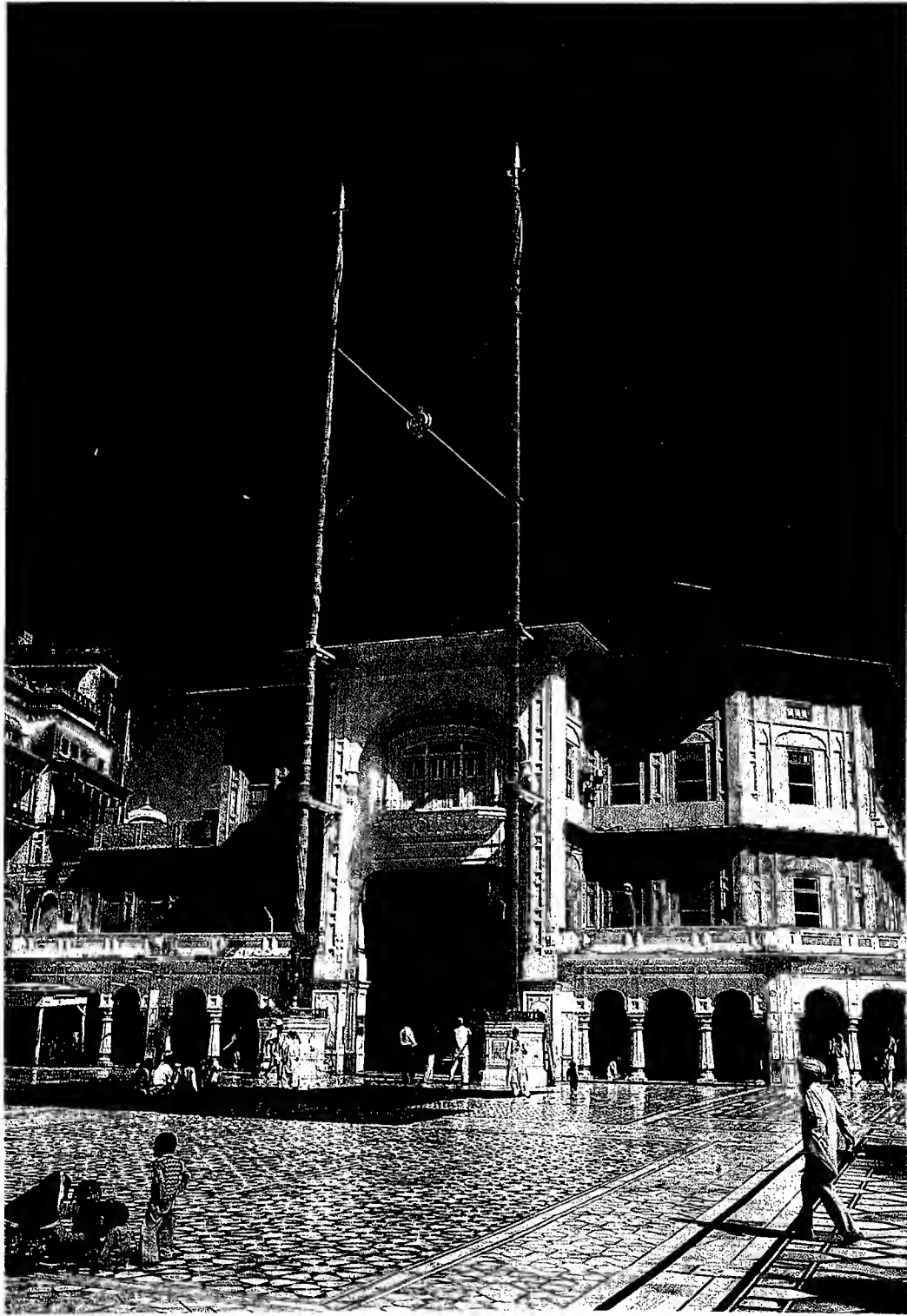


Plate 32. Jhanda Bungo in the western wing of the *parikarma*.

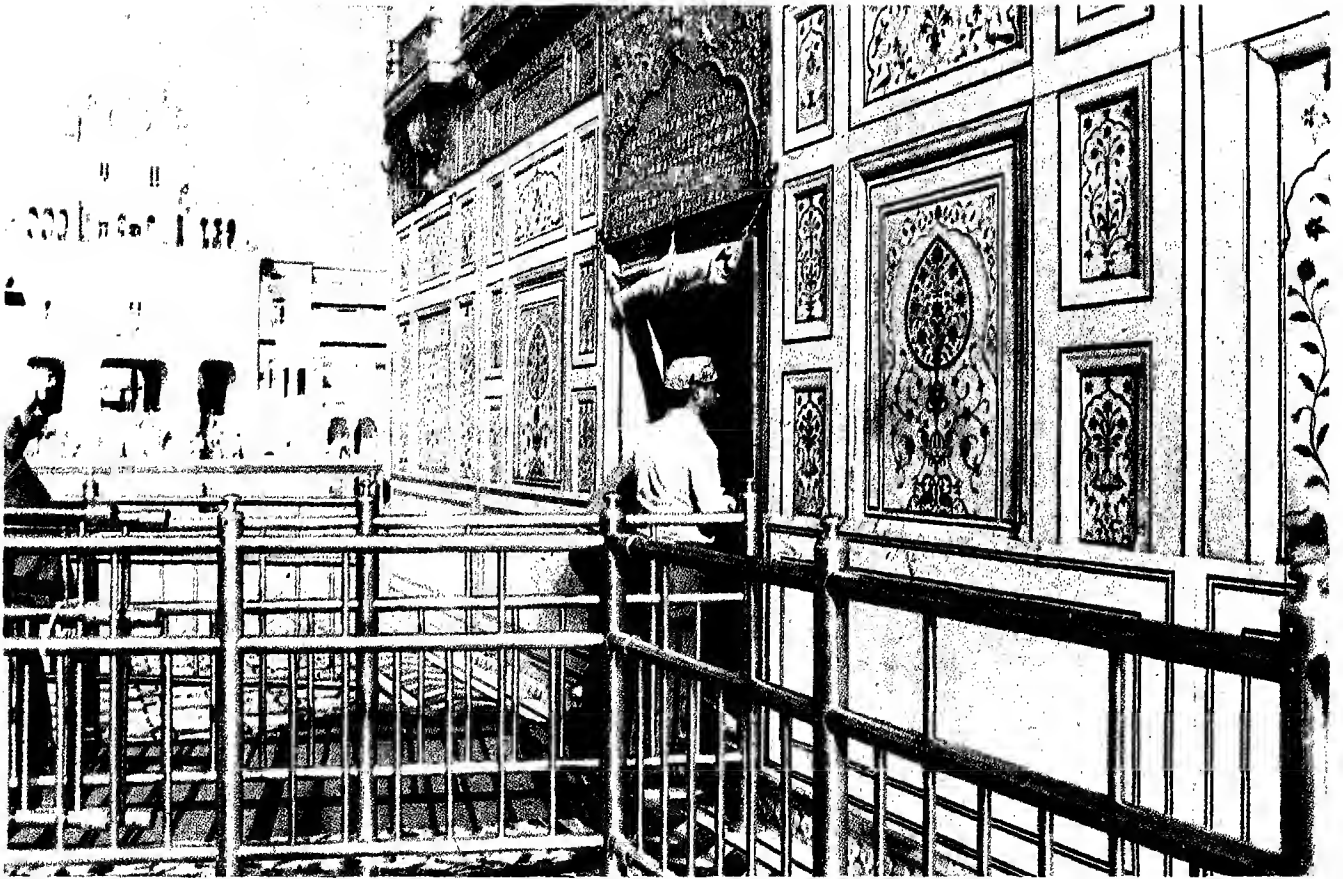


Plate 33. Inlaid marble panels on the front wall (western facade) of the Golden Temple. The technique seems to be an adaptation from Mughal decoration.

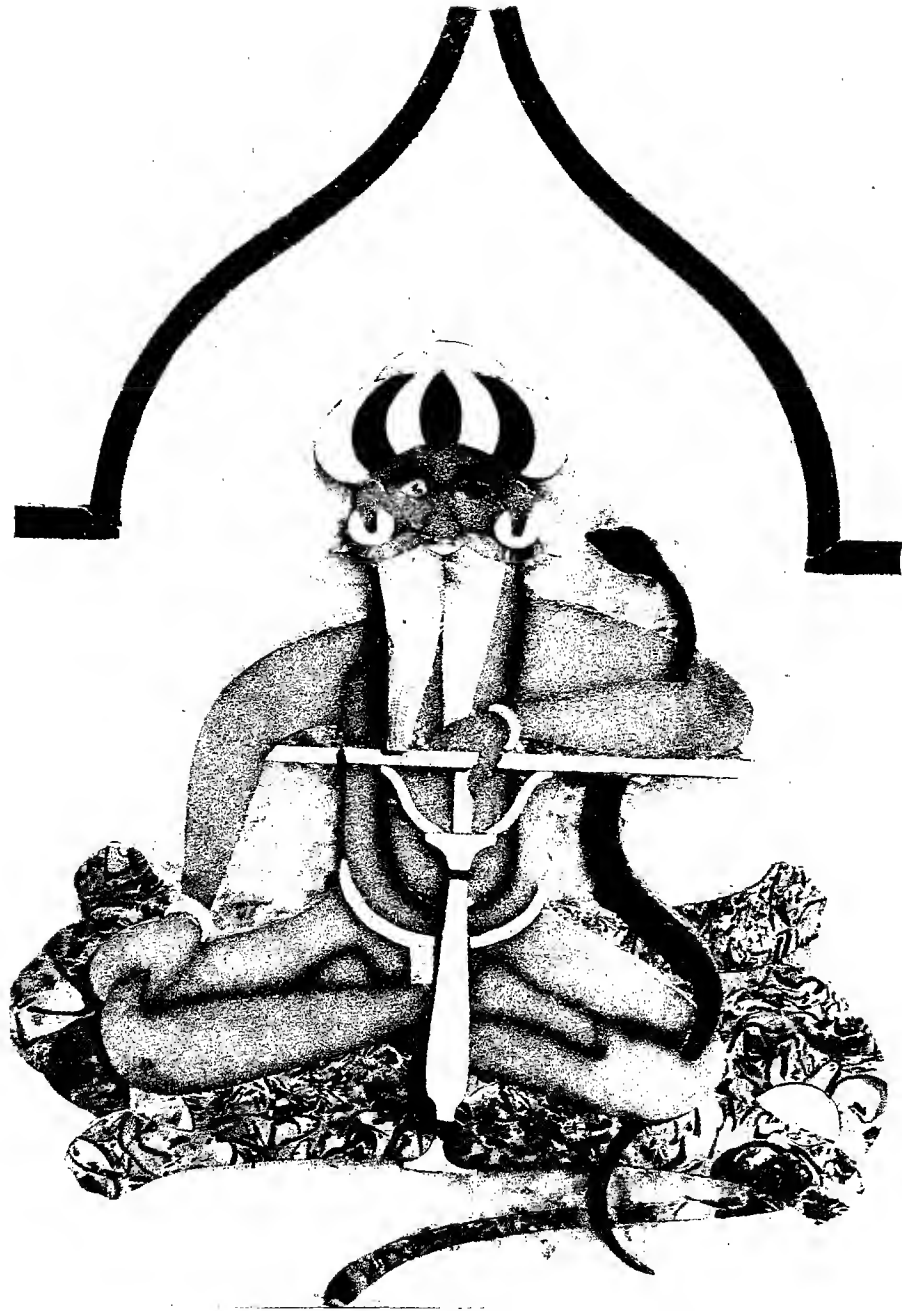


Plate 34. A 'Sāivite Yogi' inlaid in marble on the southern facade.

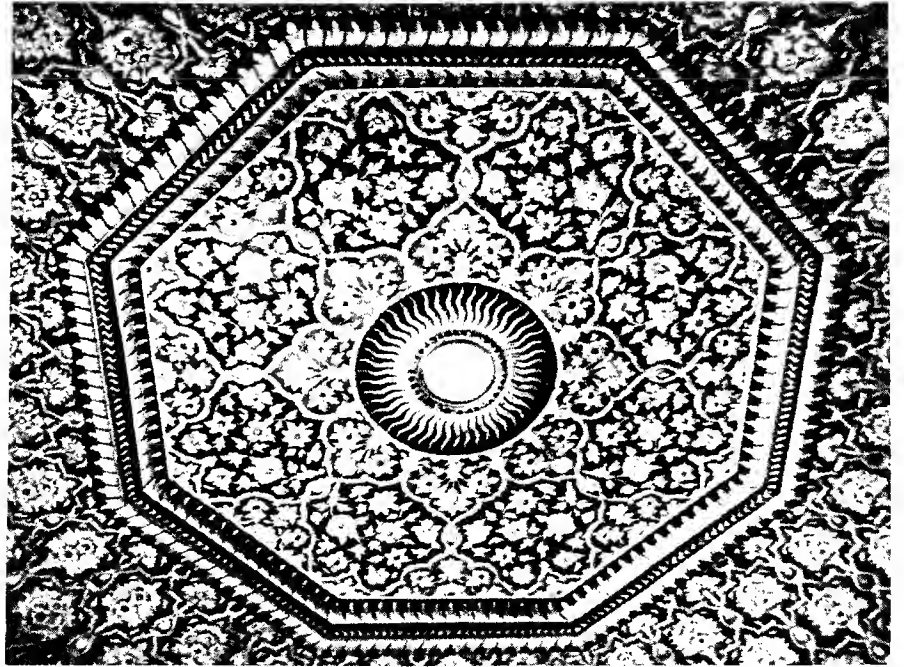


Plate 35. Jaratkāri work on the ceiling in which mirrors of various shapes and sizes have been set in plaster of paris.

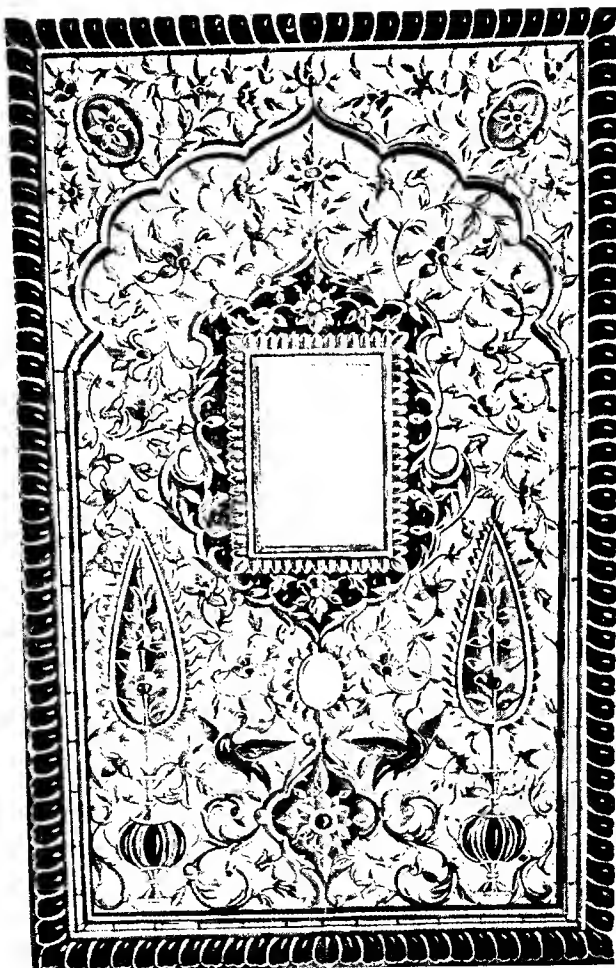


Plate 36. Specimen of Dehin Tukri work, a medium of expression of the imaginative study of idealised forms.

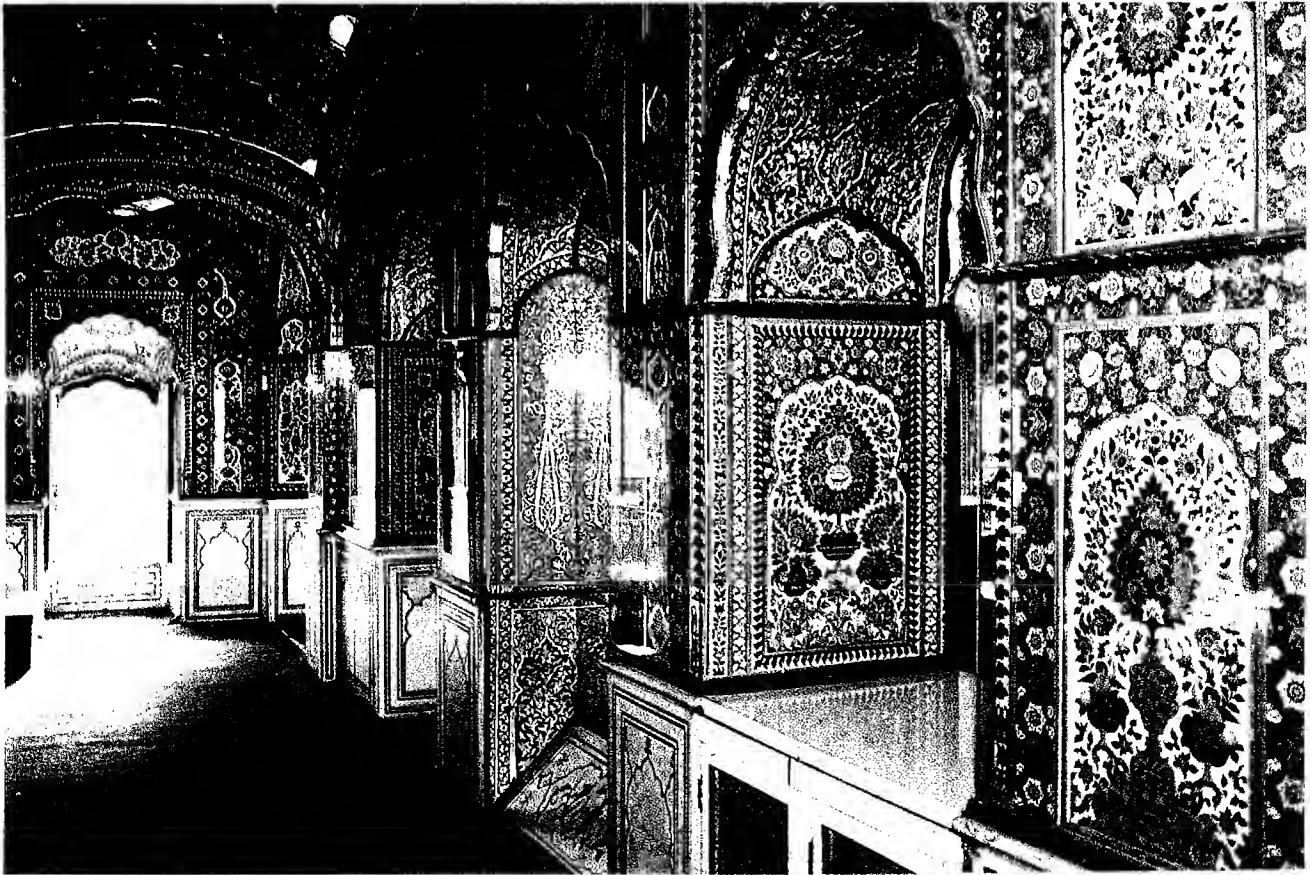


Plate 37. Fresco paintings in the gallery of the Golden Temple.

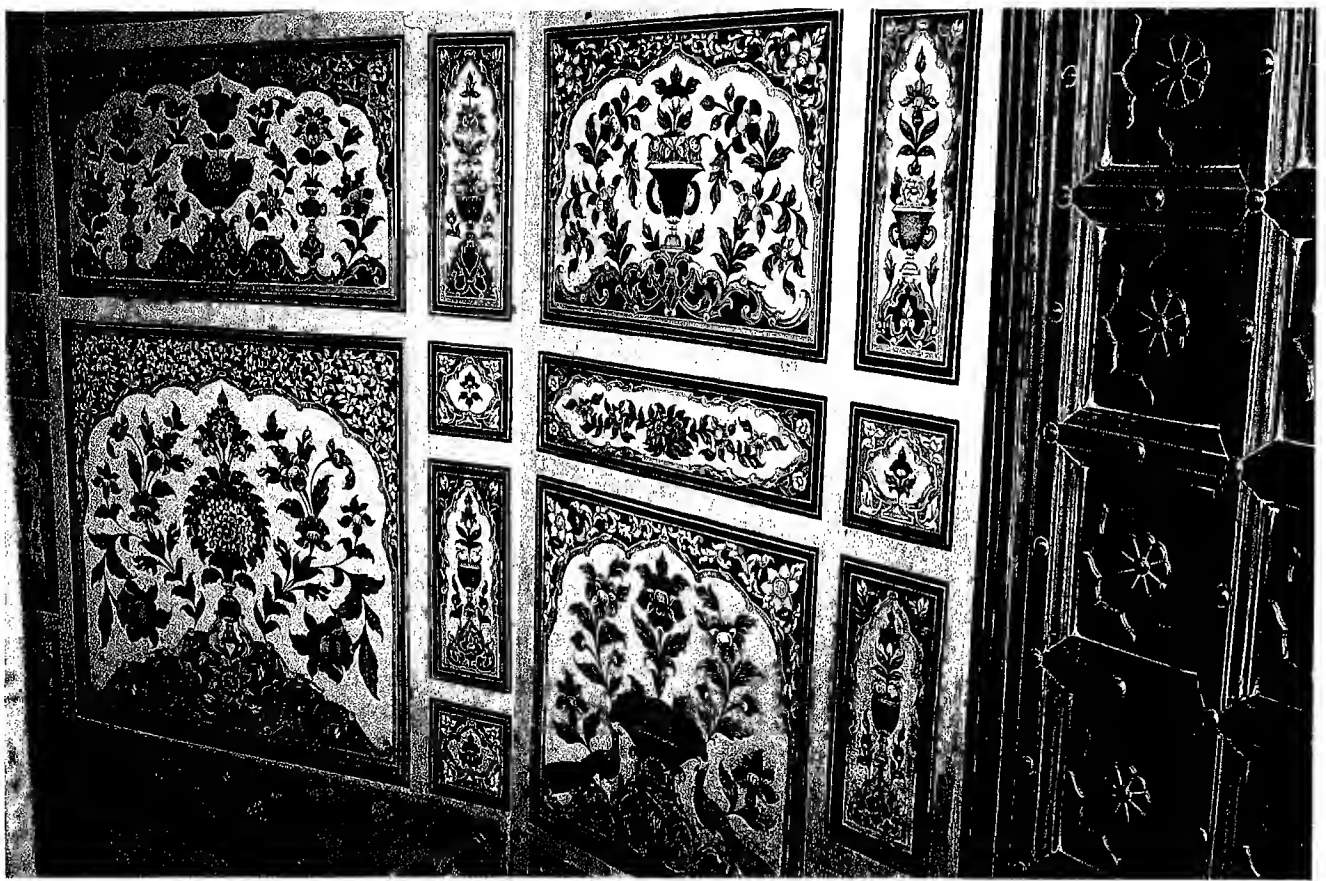


Plate 38. Original (unretouched) murals of the side walls of the eastern stairway.

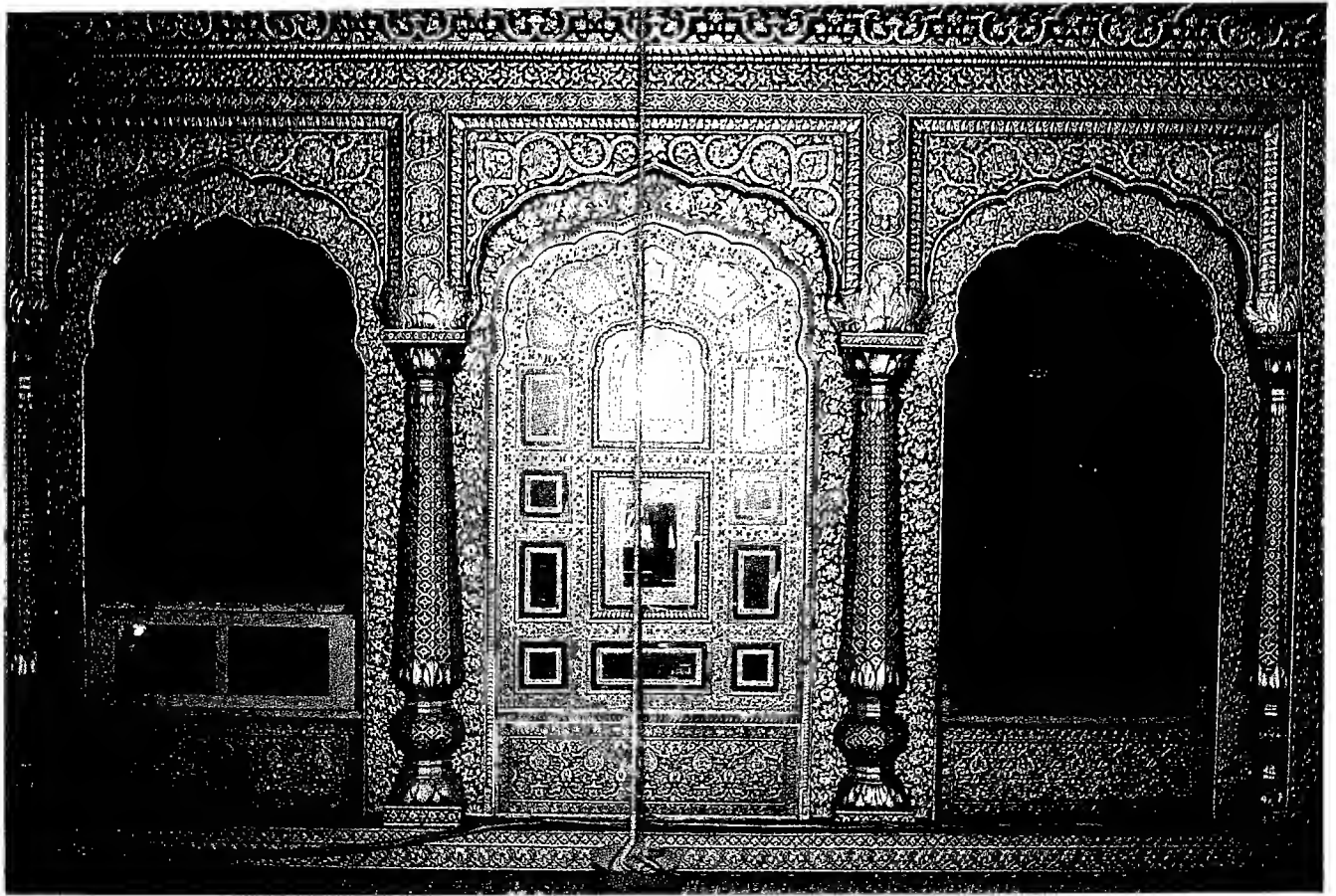


Plate 39. Naqqāshī work on the first floor.

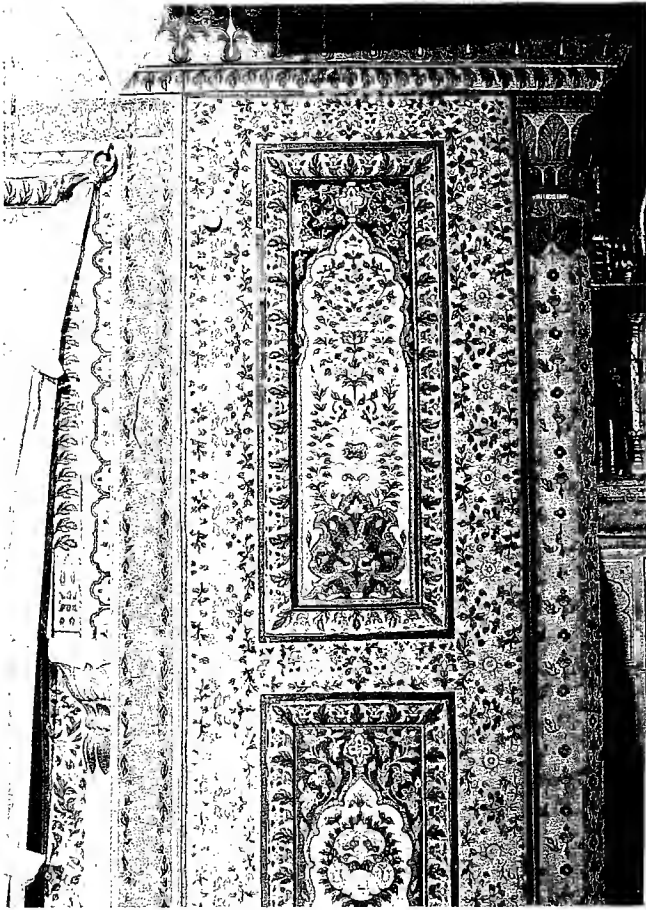


Plate 40. Murals on the eastern facade of the upper storey.

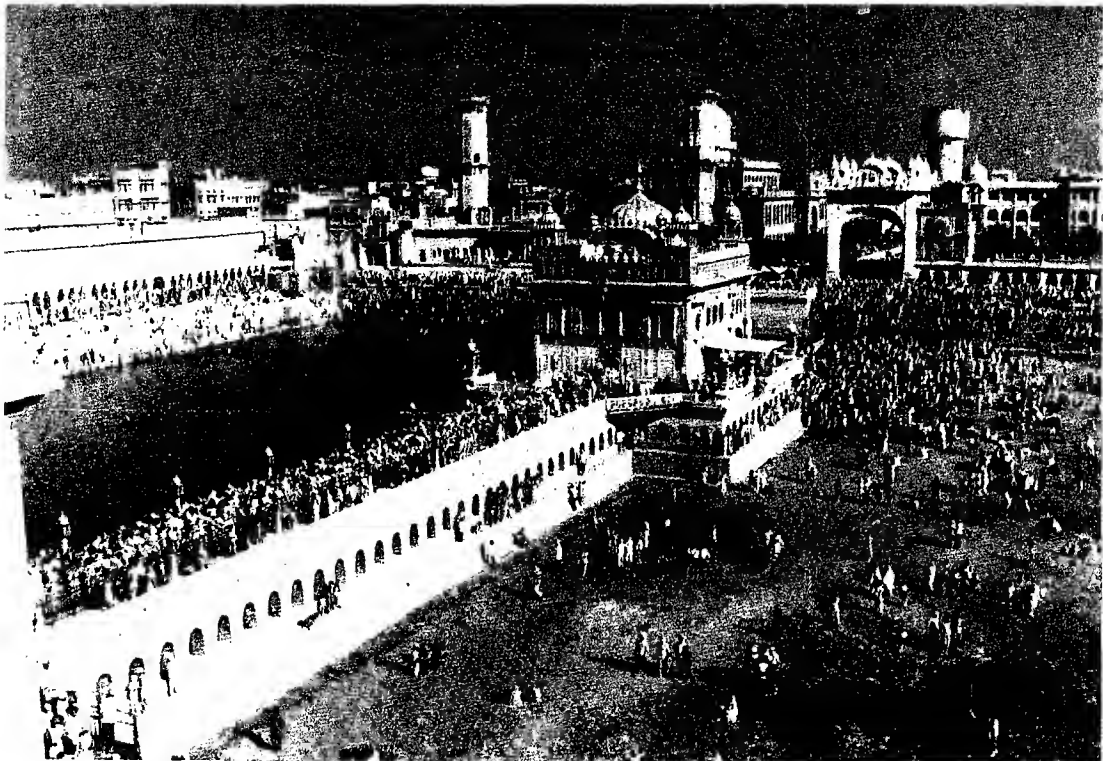


Plate 41. Kār Sevā (desilting of the Tank through voluntary labour) is in progress.



Plate 42. Guru Gobind Singh on a horse back. He is accompanied by his disciples at the time of his departure from Anandgarh fort.